

# COLLEGE ENGLISH

VOLUME 20

APRIL 1959

NUMBER

Carl Bode: The Redbrick Cinderellas • William Van O'Connor: The Grotesque in Modern American Fiction • John C. McGalliard: Resistance to Change in Language Teaching • John Pick: Victorian Anthologies • Erwin R. Steinberg: A Sermon on Articulation • Psychiatry and the Freshman Theme • Randall Stewart: Paperbacks • Advanced Communication Seminar • College Section Nominations

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#### 5. Revise and rewrite.

Revise and rewrite. Revising is part of writing. Few writers are so expert that they can produce what they are after on the first try. Quite often the writer will discover, on examining the completed work, that there are serious flaws in the arrangement of the material, calling for transpositions. When this is the case, he can save himself much labor and time by using scissors on his manuscript, cutting it to pieces and fitting the pieces together in a better order. If the work merely needs shortening, a pencil is the most useful tool; but if it needs rearranging, or stirring up, scissors should be brought into play. Do not be afraid to seize whatever you have written and cut it to ribbons; it can always be restored to its original condition in the morning, if that course seems best. Remember, it is no sign of weakness or defeat that your manuscript ends up in need of major surgery. This is a common occurrence in all writing, and among the best writers.

#### 6. Do not overwrite.

Rich, ornate prose is hard to digest, generally unwholesome, and sometimes nauseating. If the sickly sweet word, the overblown phrase, are a writer's natural form of expression, as is sometimes the case, he will have to compensate for it by a show of vigor, and by writing something as meritorious as the song of songs, which is Solomon's.

#### 7. Do not overstate.

When you overstate, the reader will be instantly on guard, and everything that has preceded your overstatement, as well as everything that follows it, will be suspect in his mind because he has lost confidence in your judgment or your poise. Overstatement is one of the common faults. A single overstatement, wherever or however it occurs, diminishes the whole, and a single carefree superlative has the power to destroy, for the reader, the object of the writer's enthusiasm.

#### 8. Avoid the use of qualifiers.

*Rather, very, little, pretty*—these are the leeches that infest the pond of prose, sucking the blood of words. The constant use of the adjective *little* (except to indicate size) is particularly depleting; we should all try to do a little better, we should all be very watchful of this rule, for it is a rather important one and we are pretty sure to violate it now and then.

#### 9. Do not affect a breezy manner.

The volume of writing is enormous, these days, and much of it has a sort of windiness about it, almost as though the author were in a state of euphoria. "Spontaneous me," sang Whitman, and in his innocence let loose the hordes of uninspired scribblers who would one day confuse spontaneity with genius.

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Vol. 20

## CONTENTS FOR APRIL 1959

No. 7

### FOR CONTRIBUTORS AND READERS

overleaf

THE REDBRICK CINDERELLAS Carl Bode 331-337

PSYCHIATRY AND THE FRESHMAN THEME Kenneth S. Rothwell 338-342

THE GROTESQUE IN MODERN AMERICAN FICTION William Van O'Connor 342-346

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING John C. McGalliard 347-350

### ROUND TABLE

*Antigone: "The Most Misread of Ancient Plays"* Richard E. Amacher 355-358

Seminar in Advanced Communication Problems Carl Lefevre 358-362

Famous Last Words, with Some Red-Penciled Notes  
on Them William H. Wiatt 362-363

Articulation: A Sermon Erwin R. Steinberg 363-365

Paperbacks Randall Stewart 365-367

THE ESSENTIAL WISDOM OF ROGER ASCHAM (verse) Frances Lenk 367

CURRENT ENGLISH FORUM Contributing Editor: Margaret M. Bryant  
Logic and Analogy in Some Adjectival Compounds J. Edwin Whitesell 368-369

Robert Dusenberry 369

THE WHALE (verse) Brice Harris 370-371

COUNCILETTER International English 370-371

NCTE College Section: 1959 Nominations

371

REBUTTAL

Linguistics and the Teaching of English Terry Hawkes 372-373

Cozzens John Lydenberg 373

BOOKS

Victorian Anthologies John Pick 374-378

Other Books 378-379

# COLLEGE ENGLISH

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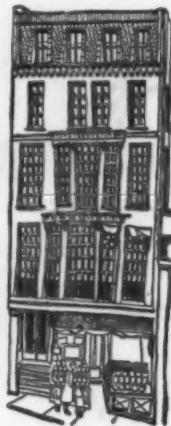
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# COLLEGE ENGLISH

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## The Redbrick Cinderellas

CARL BODE

*As Cultural Attaché at the American Embassy in London since 1957, Dr. Bode has had opportunity to observe younger British writers at close range. Ordinarily, he is a professor and Executive Secretary of the American Civilization program at the University of Maryland. He has been contributing poetry and reviews to British magazines. The Man Behind You, a collection mainly of his London poems, will be published this spring, as will The Anatomy of American Popular Culture, the second of three projected books on our cultural history.*

No one really knows how it started. One theory is that it began with the precocious boy Colin Wilson, who made the Outsider both a picture of himself and a symbol of his kind. Through his grossly overpraised first book he popularized the image of the lonely, bitter young intellectual. Another theory is that the first Angry Young Man was a brash British broadcaster named Woodrow Wyatt. But my own feeling is that it all started with Jimmy Porter, the hero of John Osborne's celebrated play *Look Back in Anger*.

The most striking thing about Jimmy Porter is that he never talks, he yells. He taunts and rants throughout the play, and always at the top of his voice. Once, when he is asked the reason for his bitterness, he condescends to explain. It was that for a year he had to watch his father die, die of neglect and despair. Yet the anger he exhibits goes far beyond its origin, and the explanation is not enough. He is now angry at every British social institution. The Monarchy, for instance, is a farce; the Established Church is a sham; even Mum, most sacred of British institutions, is an old fraud. But his steadiest quarrel is with the British middle class, the class out of

which he has taken a wife. His resentment focuses on her. Her name is Alison, she is the daughter of a retired Army officer who had served in India, of course, and her love for Jimmy has a tinge of shame. That is his main excuse for baiting her. When she writes to her mother, she does not mention him nor does her mother in return. For Jimmy is not a member of the lower classes but something worse, a man who has tried and failed to become middle-class.

Jimmy Porter has been a university man in a country where university education is the surest road to advancement. True, he has been to a "redbrick" or provincial university instead of Oxford or Cambridge, but that should have been enough. What has he done with his education, however? He has been an advertising salesman, a neophyte journalist, even a vacuum-cleaner salesman. Now he runs a candy counter. On the other hand, he continues to read the *New Statesman* and the *Observer* every week despite their banal book reviews. He knows that he is the displaced intellectual, and that surely embitters him more than the thought of his dying father.

Jimmy Porter has become, furthermore, the most prominent representation

of the Angry Young Man and has undeniably stimulated the interest, querulous but pronounced, that Britain has shown in the whole movement. For he represents a new class. Britain has always known the occasional bright boy forced to educate himself through scholarships and rewarded with prosperity once he has taken a good degree. Today, however, there has been a great change in university education. The net of examinations and scholarships is cast so wide that it catches nearly all the talented sons of the poor. But the colleges in Oxford and Cambridge are simply not large enough to hold all the talent that has been found and subsidized. As a result, a good many of the scholarship boys go to the regional universities, the urban universities newly built of raw red brick instead of the ancient stone of Oxford or the mellow clay of Cambridge. These new universities, in Leeds, Leicester, Hull and a dozen other cities are, as a matter of fact, better and stronger than Oxbridge in certain fields. Their professors may be abler, their spirit more progressive and alert. Notwithstanding, the prestige of Oxbridge remains immense. Perhaps the best proof is that the redbrick professors want even now to send their own sons to Magdalen or King's, Balliol or Trinity.

In a word, the condition of the graduate of the redbrick university is still anomalous. He is still apt to be uneasy. If like Jimmy Porter he is sensitive or unsuccessful, his uneasiness is apt to deepen into anger. Normally this feeling will have no results of great significance for anyone else. But this is by no means true in the case of the so-called Angry Young Men. Each of the major figures in the group has turned his emotions—in different ways—into first-class creative work.

These major figures seem to me to be four in number. One is John Osborne himself. Another is the comic novelist Kingsley Amis, whose novel *Lucky Jim*

is the best one the movement has produced. The third is the versatile John Wain, who has already published some engaging critical essays, two volumes of poems, and three novels of definite merit. The fourth man stands to one side of the movement but must be considered since he is its theoretician: Richard Hoggart. It would be hard to find a duller title for a penetrating book than *The Uses of Literacy*, but this study of Hoggart's has gone through several reprintings. It throws a good deal of light on how an Angry Young Man can develop. One other work of theory should also be mentioned. It is a book called *Declaration*, which presumes to be the manifesto of the movement. Eight different people, all more or less young and angry, contributed each an essay in which they gave their personal views about the movement and themselves. The book's usefulness is limited, however; we can learn much more by reading Hoggart.

John Osborne looks like a Teddy-boy, with his long sideburns, narrow arrogant face, and mop of dark hair. He is only thirty. In his short career he has been a provincial actor, good at parts that suited him naturally; and a playwright who has had five plays produced. His acting has not proved exceptional; I have seen him type-cast, with unimpressive results. But his experience in actually being on the stage has, he himself says, helped his play-writing greatly. He can write dialogue that no actor can distort but that a great actor can aggrandize. His first successful play, *Epitaph for George Dillon*, a collaboration, is the most recent to appear. It portrays a young playwright fattening on a lower middle-class family and involving them in his own failures. The most widely noticed of his three plays was of course *Look Back in Anger*. It opened in London in 1956 and has already become part of the nation's repertory. If there is any place in England where the essence of middle-

class life can be found, it is Wimbledon, and even the Wimbledon players have done well with *Look Back*.

There are reasons. Not the least is the brute vitality of the piece. British drama may not always be genteel but it is nearly always restrained. No one shouts. Yet in *Look Back*, as I have said, Jimmy Porter shouts or snarls from the time the curtain rises on his scruffy attic flat to almost the end. Contention is invariably a good subject for a play, and this play is nothing but contention. It may be Jimmy taunting his wife or railing against the whole Establishment. It may be Jimmy rolling on the floor wrestling with Cliff, the nearest thing to a friend that he has, or sneering at his temporary mistress. The only time contention is exhausted is at the end of the play; then he and Alison retreat into the mindless smugness of fuzzy bear and fury squirrel.

Osborne called his second success *The Entertainer*. Because its main role was created by the best actor on the English-speaking stage, critics have undervalued the play. But even after all allowances have been made for the magic of Laurence Olivier, we can discern a work of exceptional talent. In *Look Back* Osborne had developed one new character, Jimmy Porter, and that was enough to distinguish any playwright. In *The Entertainer*, however, he developed another: the seedy, lewd, yet sympathetic burlesque-show comedian, Archie Rice. In Olivier's hand the role was a stunning success. But it was not Olivier alone. If you look at the text, at the cold type, the good basic conception is there. With it is a sense of dramatic construction that gave the London theater one of the strongest second-act curtains it had in years. When Archie is told that a son has been murdered by the Egyptians in the Suez affair, he reaches depths of dramatic emotion seldom plumbed. And the emotion is already there, waiting. A great actor can bring it out matchlessly

but even a poor actor would be hard put to do it badly, and neither would be able to interpret it much differently from the way that Osborne had conceived it.

Seven years older than Osborne, Kingsley Amis has an equally young way of regarding life. But where in Osborne the way is one of active hostility, in Amis it is diverted into humor and satire. He actually teaches in a redbrick university, as a member of the faculty of English at the University College in Swansea, Wales. He likes Wales, but his lecturing there inevitably represents the compromise that a writer must make in order to earn a living. He was a postwar undergraduate at Oxford, where he found some sources for satire; but they were scant indeed compared with the rich possibilities of redbrick. Jim Dixon is the main character in *Lucky Jim*, a bachelor and a college lecturer in History, subject to the comic tyranny of one of the pawkiest professors ever to snuffle through a seminar or drone before a class.

The novel is the story of Jim's attempt, by stifling his impulses, to succeed in redbrick life. However, his impulses cannot be subdued, and the result is at least three scenes of better comedy than any other British writer can manage at the moment: Jim at a horrible party in the house of the professor, Jim concealing the burns he has gotten in the bedding at the professor's, Jim delivering a catastrophic lecture on Merrie England and ending in a drunken stupor.

The second novel, *That Uncertain Feeling*, is better technically than the first but not quite so comic. Here the hero is John Lewis, a young Welsh librarian with an attractive wife and family. Yet he is not a family man. "Why did I like women's breasts so much? I was clear on why I liked them, thanks, but why did I like them *so much?*" So his meditations run. When Elizabeth Gruffydd-Williams, the bosomy wife of

a wealthy councilman, lays siege to him the outcome is no surprise. However, at the end of the book John is reconciled with his attractive wife and moves to another town, though only to be beset once more. Yet he has learned something and promptly flees the new female who wants to entice him.

The vein of comedy is nearly as wide as before. Even on the basis of these two novels we can see that Amis is writing in an old, almost classic tradition, to which he gives a fresh turn. Both novels are Cinderella stories but the Cinderella is male. In both books he is pursued by a woman of much greater charm than average. Both women are in a social class above him as well as being his superior in self-possession. Both, finally, continue throughout the book to go more than half-way to meet him. In *Lucky Jim* the hero will marry the girl; in *That Uncertain Feeling* he will not, preferring to return to his wife. But Cinderella he has been nevertheless.

The scenes themselves, whether comic or not, are handled with an address that disguises their antiquity. There are two especially good examples in *That Uncertain Feeling*. The first is a chase scene in which John Lewis dresses in female clothing to escape from Elizabeth's house, and then is pursued by a laboring man with mixed motives. Anyone would think that the comic possibilities of this kind of thing had been exhausted at least by Boccaccio's time. Yet they turn fresh and funny under Amis's hand.

The other kind of scene, romantic this time, is equally ancient. Here the best example is that classically hallowed bit of wickedness, the swim at night by the unclothed lovers. And yet Amis gives it freshness through his humor. All the sinful trappings are there, but in addition we have enough wry observations by the hero to make the scene both realistic and funny. After Elizabeth has run into the black, icy water, John hesitates for

a moment. Then, "As a man burning to death will hurl himself blindly through a windowpane or over a stairhead, I hurried after her, slipping and hurting my feet on the large stones, hardly noticing the titanic agony when the water reached my crotch, falling at last with scarcely a cry and going under the surface all over." Amis goes on to develop the scene with a highly effective blending of sex, sentiment, and realism.

John Wain is short, dark, and hollow-eyed. Now thirty-three, he too was a scholarship boy who went through Oxford toward the end of the war. Thereafter he became a lecturer in English at the University of Reading. Like Amis he found teaching to be a compromise at best. Perhaps because he was unmarried (Amis is not), he ultimately gave up teaching for free-lance writing. The consequence is that he is forced to write too much, and there is a good deal of literary journalism that comes from his pen. On the other hand he can devote his time to writing and writing alone. His first novel, *Hurry on Down*, has some resemblance to *Lucky Jim*, which it actually anticipated by a few months. The hero is a university man with a love for low occupations, the plot is mildly picaresque. There are several comic setpieces and some vivid caricatures of minor characters including the Bohemian novelist Froulish and the scholarship boy Hutchins, who despises his parents and molds himself into the semblance of a don. The scruffiness of the characters is beyond that in either of Amis's novels. The comic touch appears at intervals though Wain lacks Amis's considerable gift. He is, however, a better storyteller.

He has now published two more novels, *The Contenders* and *A Travelling Woman*, and will doubtless publish others. His energy is considerable and he gains in adroitness as he writes. Furthermore, he promises to become a novelist of ideas. As an all-round writer he is

plainly better than Amis though he needs a good deal to compensate for Amis's sense of the ridiculous.

But Wain has other claims on our notice. His *Preliminary Essays* show him to be a critic with a fresh, unpretentious mind. He judges without pomposity and is unabashed by the thinness of some of his scholarship. He can, for instance, cite some epilogues from Restoration plays and then confess engagingly that he got them all from one book. At the base of his criticism is common sense but on this he still builds rather shakily. He has not yet decided whether he has a set of formal critical principles or not. Nor has he engaged in cultivating his taste in the fashion so well exemplified in the writing of David Cecil. Our verdict can well be that Wain is a critic, and rather a good one, in the making. It is only fair to note that the title *Preliminary Essays* is proper.

Lastly, Richard Hoggart. He looks a bit like Wain but has a Yorkshire solidity instead of Wain's slight shamble. He went to the University of Leeds, on a scholarship; and today, at forty, he lectures in adult education at the University of Hull. His *The Uses of Literacy* is an impressive book, skillfully combining two different sorts of writing. One is cultural autobiography, the story of the influences on Hoggart's own youth in a working-class neighborhood of Leeds. On the whole, he views his past with a rare blend of sympathy and appraisal, seldom marred by sentimentalism. The other sort of writing is a literary and cultural analysis of the publications and entertainments intended for the working classes—in American jargon, the mass media and the mass arts. Here Hoggart interprets a subject which only sociologists had dealt with before. He makes the middle-class reader aware of unsuspected reasons for the flourishing of British television in the working class, for the perfect triviality of nearly all afternoon newspapers, for the continued

acceptance of the *News of the World* (the most vulgar and widely circulated Sunday paper in Britain) and the manifold shoddy magazines.

The most relevant section of the book for our purposes, however, is headed "Unbent Springs: a Note on the Uprooted and Anxious." The first of its two parts, "Scholarship Boy," is doubtless about Hoggart himself. He traces the gradual alienation of the boy from his working-class family. It starts simply with praise for his intelligence, praise usually from the female members of his family rather than the male. The boy works hard and wins his first scholarship. Yet he is still living at home, still wants the best of both worlds. At night when he must do his homework, his friends are out somewhere, perhaps at the street corner, and his family goes on with its normal pattern of odd jobs and talk to the accompaniment of the "telly." He tries to study—and must—but the problem is considerable.

Hoggart is at his best when he reminds us of the obstacles to study that no one would think of without personal experience. For example, the problem created by the fact that the one warm room is the family room. No British working-class family would heat a bedroom simply for a son to study in. And for his part he would not wish to be cut off from his family. So he stays among them but tries to shut out their amiable noise. Whatever adjustment is reached, it is bound to be infirm.

Then as time passes and work is rewarded, the boy moves from one scholarship to another. As he moves he changes his accent and acquires a new scale of values. His schoolmaster becomes in a sense his father. His education evolves into a series of hurdles, of examinations to pass. He learns to be receptive, retentive, meticulous. He does not see that his education is failing him by leaving him no zest for knowledge for its own sake, and no boldness. At

last when the young man, with his university degree, is ready to take his place in the world, he faces an entirely new situation—a world large, disorderly, filled with emotion and unreason, far different from the neat, artificial universe he has been conditioned to. Small wonder that he is more apt to end by feeling lost and displaced, anxious and angry, than either the lad from the lower classes or the young man born to the assurance of middle-class life.

Now we have come to a point where we ought to anatomize the anger and also see more of its creative results. Though they would disdain the title, the Angry Young Men are men of letters. They are important to us not because of any anger they may have but because of the creative results of their emotion. In his essay in *Declaration*, John Osborne says that he simply cannot laugh at the idiocies of the people who rule his country, and his contempt for their institutions is savage: he calls respect for royalty "the national swill." And he does not laugh. Instead he uses his plays to "make people feel, to give them lessons in feeling." This is what he thinks the English especially need, so he has Jimmy Porter shout at them or seedy Archie Rice sneer at them. Unlikely as it seems in the abstract, Osborne's attempt succeeds. There is little doubt that his plays have moved their audiences far more than have the plays of most men. The audiences, both British and American, may not like the way he moves them but they are moved.

Kingsley Amis, on the other hand, can laugh and continues to do so. He takes the things that goad Osborne and blunts their point. Like Osborne, he is radical in his political views and has published a colorful ("tarted up" was his phrase for it) pamphlet on socialist doctrines. But his most important channel for his anger has been his novels, and he has channeled it so well that it may be that he should not be considered an

angry young man at all but rather a satirical one. His satire transcends class boundaries and institutions. He can show us the antics of a contentious slattern just as laughably as the pompous posturings of a Welsh nabob. The excesses of human nature themselves are his target. He writes about them not to reform nor to scourge but to amuse. Nothing is safe from him. The Welsh are both sensitive and proud—and Amis lives in Wales—but seldom have they been lampooned as effectively as in the scene in *That Uncertain Feeling* where John Lewis appears before a Welsh library committee to apply for a better job.

In the case of John Wain too, those feelings that made people call him an angry young man are channeled into his novels and his literary criticism. In the criticism they sum up almost entirely as a contempt for cant. In the novels they show themselves in diverse ways. Something of Amis's satire can be discerned, especially in Wain's *Hurry on Down*. It is important to notice that his ideas, unlike Osborne's and Amis's, are conservative. All this affects his writing. As he says in *Declaration*, he does not believe that the artist should withdraw from society. The artist is a whole man, with the responsibilities of such a man. He is not to be a conformist but he is not to be a constant rebel either.

Richard Hoggart's book is not subject to the same sort of standard as the creative work of the rest, but the act of writing *The Uses of Literacy* can be interpreted as catharsis. By his putting down problems on paper, by creating in words, the anger is employed with profit.

I have used the Cinderella image for the hero in Amis's novels. But it holds for the personal experience of each of the Angry Young Men. Youthful though they are, they have known through the products of their passion a measure of success far beyond what any of them must have hoped. Osborne is an inter-

national success as a playwright, already rich and respected. No playwright could read either the London or New York reviews of *Look Back in Anger* or *The Entertainer* without feeling his anger melt. Amis is recognized by many critics as the most effective comic novelist now writing in English. He has already begun to win prizes for his work and he is wooed by publishers. His reputation too is international. His standing as a writer is reflected even in his repute as a teacher; this year one of the best of American universities has added him to its visiting faculty. Wain has become a recognized member of the British elite, the so-called Establishment. He writes for the best and most lucrative of British publications. As this is written, he also is leaving for a visit to America and will lecture in various places in the States. And Hoggart, though not the artist that the others are, is an authority on British culture who appears often on BBC and is expected to say the definitive word on issues in his field.

Here then is Cinderella, married to the prince and starting to live in the palace. But how will the marriage work out? No one has ever added a postscript to that original Cinderella story. What will happen to John Osborne? He cannot do Jimmy Porter or George Dillon again; he must try something else. (The latest report is that he is writing a musical comedy.) My guess, for what it is

worth, is that he will find new and fruitful ways to move his audience—and that these ways will be conservative ones. Amis has used the same hero in three novels. By the third time, in *I Like It Here* (a clumsy combination of farce and travel book), he was worn out. The critics were patient and hoped for better work later. But *I Like It Here* simply could not compare with *Lucky Jim* or *That Uncertain Feeling*. Wain is more predictable. His novels and essays will probably come out as before, propelled by his considerable energy. They will, it may be hazarded, increase in wisdom even though they lose in zest. But regardless of what these three men achieve after this, each has already made a contribution to his time.

The movement of which they are the main members is in one sense no movement at all. Wain denies that it exists. Osborne is grudging, saying in *Declaration* only "Well, the principal figures in this equation seem to have been Kingsley Amis, John Wain—and myself." Amis apparently does not feel engaged and he refused to have anything to do with *Declaration*. Notwithstanding, the movement, for all its merely journalistic name and fame, will have a place in the literary histories. For it has involved, through a process transcending logic, several men of letters so talented that they have already outshone many of the writers of the decade before them.

## The elimination of Freshman English—

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# Psychiatry and the Freshman Theme

KENNETH S. ROTHWELL

*An assistant professor at the University of Kansas, the author has a B.A. from the University of North Carolina and a Ph.D. from Columbia. His teaching experience also includes three years at the University of Rochester and two at the University of Cincinnati.*

College teachers of composition periodically encounter students whose difficulties can best be resolved in the office of a psychiatrist, if there.<sup>1</sup> Early recognition of such disturbed types can save a harassed instructor hours of his valuable time which might more profitably be devoted to students capable of absorbing instruction. Failure to sense that a student's difficulties are less rhetorical than emotional may place the teacher on the couch before the pupil.

Nearly every school in the nation annually enrolls a "character" who becomes legendary for his exploits. In the writer's own experience there has been a boy who always brought a live pigeon to conferences and who always expressed astonishment that the creature's presence went unappreciated. ("He was trying to give you the bird," a thoughtful colleague suggested.) There has been a girl whose self-diagnosed genius elevated her work beyond criticism, and who therefore felt compelled to shriek whenever apprised—however diplomatically—of her comma splices. There has been a boy who airily forgave the instructor's inability to detect sense in the nonsense of the student's themes. Frequently these eccentricities are surface in character; they are adolescent shenanigans, not to be solemnized with the terminology of psychology. As Sir Francis Bacon might have put it—some such students are mere eccentrics, others

painful bores, and a few perhaps geniuses. Certainly the last thing we should do in an age of conformity is to label every aberration from the normal as a psychological disturbance.

When, however, emotional difficulties destroy a student's ability to think and to write clearly, the teacher of English faces a different situation. He needs to recognize such writing not only to help the student but also to spare himself a disheartening struggle. He should be equipped to distinguish between sloppy writing which results in incoherence, and abnormal thought which produces incoherence. As a general rule, the lazy student achieves opacity through underdevelopment of ideas. The disturbed student reaches the same condition through inconsistency in development of his thought: one paragraph may explore an idea relentlessly while the next paragraph may suggest apathy. The instructor should recognize the difference between a creative mind which consistently coins brilliant images and a disturbed mind which alternates between the pedestrian and the bizarre figure of speech. He should detect the gulf between poor organization induced by laziness and haste, and a breakdown in unity stemming from a mental block, when the student's mind approaches what the psychologist might call "forbidden areas." No amateur of course can presume omniscience on this specialized subject. A teacher can be usefully equipped, however, with clues to the danger signals. In this way he can spare himself the frustration of prescribing a stiff dose of neoclassicism to an appar-

<sup>1</sup>The writer is greatly indebted to Dr. William Broen of the Department of Psychology at the University of Kansas (now at UCLA) for reading, criticizing, and suggesting important revisions for this paper.

ent romantic genius, who actually requires clinical rather than rhetorical therapy.

Three case histories furnish examples of the sort of emotional difficulty which may be encountered among students of freshman composition. Student A, enrolled in a conservative, Eastern university, was to all outward appearances enviably well-adjusted. An honor student in high school, he played on the freshman football team and belonged to one of the better fraternities. His themes displayed flashes of apparent brilliance, though the brilliance would always evaporate after a few sentences into incoherence. He had an extraordinary habit of coining his own words. For example, he could not say that he was "happy"; instead he had to say that he had found "meliplasm in ecstasy." He constructed gorgeous analogies, though their exact relevance to the term under comparison was not always apparent. Reading Milton was to him like "seeing flashes of fire traverse up and down the neurons and ganglia and burn away the sheathing." The teacher initially mistook this bizarre expression as a revival of the metaphysical style. In his anxiety to nurture latent talent, he forgot that the intricate conceits of John Donne reveal a mind which could sustain a logical thought. The figures constructed by the student were neither logical nor sustained. Well-intentioned efforts to impose restraint on the boy's writing only met with hostility. The student insisted, rather vehemently, that "meliplasm in ecstasy" was the only possible phrase for expressing his inner emotion. Criticism of a paper's transitions or logical structure was rebuffed with the statement: "I can understand it, so why can't you?" The latter challenge, which the reader will surely recognize as a stock response from an insecure freshman, might have been disregarded, if it had not been for its position as only one part of a complex syndrome.

When the semester had nearly ended, the instructor—exhausted from the weekly argument with the student—referred the boy to the University psychologist. He had finally realized that no handbook of freshman composition could ever solve the student's writing problems. The clinician's diagnosis confirmed a growing suspicion that the boy's themes revealed a general retreat from reality into a private world, conveniently barren not only of rhetorical rules but of all rules. In retrospect it was easy to see that A's themes had revealed tendencies toward psychosis.<sup>2</sup> His attitude revealed a disregard for "realistic or logical concepts" even to the point where reality became falsified.<sup>3</sup> This habit would bolster the boy's assumption that if he knew what he meant, why shouldn't everyone else? The paranoic belief that his instructor was out "to destroy his style of writing"—not to help him—fitted into the general pattern. The incompleteness of thought showed what the handbooks of psychology call "flights of ideas" or "word salad," an unexpected spurt of creative power without any real direction. The insistence on constructing neologisms, despite the plenitude of Webster's, represented sheer perversity to the teacher, but the psychologist saw these words as "condensations and symbolizations of conflicts, or unconscious materials highly charged with affect." The abrupt termination of thought which the instructor had red-penciled "poor transition" emerged in the psychologist's

<sup>2</sup>The verbal symptoms outlined here suggest several diagnostic possibilities: schizophrenia, manic-depressive psychosis, and paranoia. Cf. R. M. Drake, *Abnormal Psychology* (1954), pp. 97, 101, 103; T. W. Richards, *Modern Clinical Psychology* (1946), pp. 151-215. Exact diagnosis of course is a task for the professional.

<sup>3</sup>Professor Richards cites (p. 163) Conrad Aiken's "Silent Snow, Secret Snow" as a picture of childhood schizophrenia, and Willa Cather's "Paul's Case" as representative of schizophrenia in adolescence. Both these stories provide excellent insights into emotional disturbance for the teacher of composition.

rhetoric as "blocking"—another generalized symptom of psychological disturbance. None of these peculiarities in themselves represents anything uncommon. All of us at one time or another catch ourselves committing them. The classic combination, however, caught the teacher's eye and alerted him to the seriousness of the problem. The psychologist declared that in adolescence the distinction between abnormal and normal behavior is sometimes difficult to draw. Nevertheless it was decided that Student A should be discreetly watched throughout his undergraduate career.

Student B, enrolled at a mid-Western municipal university, displayed nearly identical symptoms. His attitude, however, was one of abnormal docility rather than hostility. His term paper, which analyzed "Faith and Reason in America," began matter-of-factly, though it displayed no great competence in expression:

Modern conceptions of sin are related to the definition set forth in this paper. Most Christian people tend to put faith in the belief that man is sinful as a result of the original sin of Adam and the environment too can increase or minimize the existence of it.

Certainly nothing unusual about this statement is discernible. The subsequent paragraph, however, soars off into strained imagery, appears momentarily lucid, and then dissipates into mist. Strikingly apparent is the contrast between the paragraph quoted above and the one quoted here (with original student misspellings):

In our sciences we learn that during fetal development certain chromosomes from the male and female that develop into a zygote are influenced by chemical and atmospheric environment in causing certain characteristics to be dominant or recessive. The chromosomes carry all traits that make up the entire being. These include color, intelligence, stature, behavior, and a host of such things. The person thus far is still sub-

ject to environmental changes, and we may thus conclude that sin is liable to both that of Adam and present external and internal environmental conditions.

The analogy is muddily conceived and clumsily executed. The misspellings, not by themselves of any significance, underscore the disparity between the writer's tools of expression and the choice of subject. The next paragraph shifts back into the mundane style discovered at the beginning of the paper.

Student B's case turned out to be far less serious than that of Student A. A check with the Dean's office revealed that he was already under treatment at a local veterans hospital for illness incurred while a prisoner in Korea. Far more amenable to constructive criticism than Student A, he began to respond hearteningly to his teacher's instructions towards the end of the semester. In this case, knowledge of the boy's emotional difficulties, as glimpsed in a single paragraph, warned the instructor sufficiently to forestall possible disaster. The instructor was encouraged to treat B with exceptional sympathy and tact. Furthermore, the teacher was less likely to become discouraged about the apparent deficiencies of his professional ability. The teacher of composition has enough difficulty accomplishing the possible without undertaking the impossible.

Student C was enrolled at a large mid-Western university.<sup>4</sup> His symptoms followed the same general pattern as those discovered in A and B. If anything, judged by both conduct and writing, he represented the most difficult case of all. He openly flouted all known mores on a conformist campus. He was what students call a "pseudo," what teachers call "difficult," and what the less sophisticated might call "queer." His

<sup>4</sup>I am obliged to Professor Albert Kitzhaber, Director of Freshman-Sophomore English at the University of Kansas, for sharing his extensive knowledge of problems in teaching composition with me.

compulsion to stir up trouble differed from a healthy drive to assert individuality in its aimlessness. From the title of one of his themes—"A Study in Colours and an Inquiry Into the Villainy of Manicheism"—the reader might not guess that its subject was *Othello*. His first premise offered the proposition: "Was Iago virtuous, or did he have intercourse with Emily?" The paper went on to declare:

How else may sensible people explain the irregular villainy of Iago? His peculiar aversion to the reproduction of the species (Note he had not children) exemplified by his uncharitable descriptions of the sex-act? And while admitting of other equally valid explanations, this resentful attitude anent reproduction is as previously stated a very fundamental tenet of Manicheism.

The arabesque texture defies analysis, not because of literary originality but because of mental aberration. A subsequent paragraph offers a harvest of inkhorn terms, designed less to clarify than to dazzle:

Yet what dramatic qualities manicheism [sic] suggested to Shakespeare's mind are not immediately clear, at any rate in the context of the tragedy. It does well for a comedy, and perhaps this play seen critically and read with an eye towards its farcical whole, while crediting its continuity as excellently fine, still leaves considerable to be desired, a desideratum deplorably unnoticed for the play is adequately ampullose in dialogue and effrenate emotions not suggest a deeper meaning. There are other disfeatures, less perhaps in the dyatyposis of characters than elsewhere, but apparent to the perceptive viewer.

The last paragraph of the paper should dispel any lingering belief that C was less emotionally disturbed than a misunderstood genius:

Manicheism in its intent, or theoretical Manicheism would seem less effectually realisable if this were indeed the only example of it in our literature, but Shakespeare's prejudice colouring his conception thereof seems but a feeble shaft, broken against the

clear, luminously pure shield of Manicheism.

Using the orthodox method of marking this from a convenient chart at the back of a freshman rhetoric merely unnerved the grader. Consultation proved fruitless because the boy's massive ego effectively barred rational criticism. Failing the paper only meant inviting a scene in which the student would snarl that he was being persecuted by his teacher.

Three students in widely separated institutions have been discussed to show the similarity of their cases. Deliberately no attempt has been made to explore their family background or general attitudes toward life. Such questions should be left to people with greater knowledge of the subject than the writer. For teachers of English the interesting fact lies in the uniform manner of expression. Each student, in varying measure, constructed an imagery based on a private vision of reality (doubtless the reader will have noted the curious partiality of all three to medical imagery); each, except for Student B, in conference with a teacher offered evidence of delusions of grandeur ("the genius pose") or a sense of persecution. The writing was badly organized and logically disconnected, with little evidence that the student could sustain any of the spurious flashes of brilliance. The creation of neologisms, or the search for an exotic mode of expression, revealed another identifiable pattern. A combination of all of these traits, not one or two, in a student paper *may* suggest emotional disturbance. For this reason the teacher should refer the student to the psychology clinic early in the term, making the arrangement with the office of the Dean of Students, not with the student himself.

Whatever the benefits of this approach to the student, the dividends to the instructor are substantial. A conscientious teacher learns that a supposed failure is something beyond his control. He no

longer feels obliged to waste precious energy struggling with an unteachable pupil. His sagging morale can be sup-

ported with the knowledge that Student D is no unique genius, but a fairly common phenomenon.

## The Grotesque in Modern American Fiction

WILLIAM VAN O'CONNOR

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In one of his essays in *Past Masters*, Thomas Mann has this to say about the prevalence of the grotesque in modern literature:

For I feel that, broadly and essentially, the striking feature of modern art is that it has ceased to recognize the categories of tragic and comic, or the dramatic classifications, tragedy and comedy. It sees life as tragic-comedy, with the result that the grotesque is its most genuine style—to the extent, indeed, that today that is the only guise in which the sublime may appear. For, if I may say so, the grotesque is the genuine anti-bourgeois style; and however bourgeois Anglo-Saxendom may otherwise be or appear, it is a fact that in art the comic-grotesque has always been its strong point.

Mann did not develop this statement or point to works that he considered examples of the grotesque. Even so, he has said several things that seem to be true of the grotesque: that the sharp division between tragedy and comedy has broken down; that the sublime sometimes lurks behind weirdly distorted images; and that the literature of the grotesque is in reaction against the sometimes bland surfaces of bourgeois customs and habits.

Since the seventeenth century many

sensitive men have been uneasy with science and the states of mind or points of view that accompanied "scientific thinking." They have felt that science emphasized the finiteness of the human being, asked him to look at himself as merely a thing in an all-embracing mechanical order, and estranged him in a variety of ways. There were those too of course who welcomed it because of the sense of order it gave or promised to give. A part of this order, or ordering, was the development of applied science or industrialism. With it of course came the bourgeois world and the bourgeois mentality. Almost all of modern literature, as we know, is a protest in one form or another against a too easy faith in progress, against the literal-mindedness and snugness that this mentality invited. As soon as one uses the phrase "the alienated artist," a whole range of writers asks to be listed.

It is also an old story in literary criticism that dramatists emulating scientists created a stage that had the shape and the function of the glass slide. Dramatist and scientist were both explaining, or seemed to be explaining, the nature of man. The stage developed three walls and realistic props. Today when we are

trying rather to explain both the nature of science and its relationship to ourselves, the shape of the stage again is beginning to change. In other words, literary forms shift with shifts in our view of ourselves.

This has been an age of violence, with wars, genocide, atom bombs, and great social changes. The century just before ours learned that man had evolved from lower biological species, and certain of its philosophers stressed both the irrationality of human nature and the ways in which our actions were determined by forces beyond our control. The literature of the grotesque has been in response to these shifts.

The grotesque is not the sole form expressing the nature of modern man, but it is a widely prevalent form. In America it has clear antecedents in Edgar Allan Poe; it has antecedents in the Literary Naturalists Crane, Norris, and London, and in those other protestants against the genteel mind, Edgar Saltus and Ambrose Bierce. Perhaps the South has produced more than its share of the grotesque. The writers are easily listed: Caldwell, Faulkner, Warren, Welty, McCullers, O'Connor, Capote, and Williams. And some of the reasons are clear enough: the old agricultural system depleted the land and poverty bred abnormality; in many cases people were living with a code that was no longer applicable, and this meant a detachment from reality and loss of vitality. But the grotesque has been seen everywhere in American life and fiction. Sherwood Anderson found it in the small town in Ohio. Nathanael West saw it in Vermont, New York City, and in Hollywood. Nelson Algren finds it in Chicago and in New Orleans. Paul Bowles finds it in Africa. Behind all of these writers, Northerner and Southerner alike, are nineteenth-century discoveries and emphases.

Thomas Mann's point that the grotesque is an anti-bourgeois style could

be assented to for the wrong reasons or rather for over-simplified reasons. Among American literary historians there is, or has been, a group that has been content to account for literary forms largely or solely in social and political terms. They could say, for example, that grotesques occur because of unjust treatment of the Negro, of the tenant farmer, or of the immigrant forced to live in a slum. In other words, they would study the grotesque as a social phenomenon and as a problem to be solved. Undoubtedly they would select case-histories from: Stephen Crane, Sherwood Anderson, West, Caldwell, and Algren.

Our literature has also been categorized in terms of there being two major visions, a vision of innocence and a vision of horror. Whitman will do as the voice of the former and Poe will do as the voice of the latter. There is also William Dean Howells's famous statement about the ungloomy quality of American life:

It is one of the reflections suggested by Dostoevsky's novel, *The Crime and the Punishment*, that whoever struck a note so profoundly tragic would do a false and mistaken thing. . . . Our novelists, therefore, concern themselves with the more smiling aspects of life, which are the more American.

On the other hand, modern American literature is characterized by horrors and violence.

In some of our best nineteenth century fiction there is a conscious interplay between tragic inevitabilities and a splendid vision of man's possibilities. In much of our twentieth-century fiction there is an encounter between the dream of innocence and a sense of guilt and defeat. The dream of innocence as encountered in Crane, Anderson or Caldwell is greatly diminished from what it was in *Crèvecoeur*, Whitman, or Howells. Crane and the others were sensitive and sympathetic men and they

protested social and political injustices, but this is not all that they are showing us.

Behind Crane's rage at human injustice and stupidity, there is a backdrop of cosmic pointlessness. Behind Anderson's theory that somewhere along the line America has failed her citizens is the dark suspicion that his grotesques, and perhaps all of us, stand facing a thick wall. Behind West's bitter satire on the American preoccupation with material things or with the simple-minded Horatio Alger myth is a deep suspicion that all beliefs are demonstrably illusory and false. Mixed with Caldwell's condemnation of certain of his villains is a detached delight in complications of the villainy itself. Nelson Algren occasionally protests in social and economic terms, but the violence in his stories is a protest against a sense of emptiness and meaninglessness. The more significant sources of the grotesque in most of their stories are well below the level of social and political injustice.

Many of the writers who have emerged, or whose reputations have grown, since World War II seem far removed from nineteenth-century morality. In Eudora Welty's stories, morality and righteousness are not principles; sentiment and sympathy are principles. Her characters seem to live in a land of dreams where everything is both eerie and incongruous.

In Carson McCullers's stories, the controlling factor is psychological motivation. Almost invariably the motivations are abnormal or perverse, but Miss McCullers seems to ask that they be taken as "normal." Some of the characters are almost mannequins, and their actions seem only a parody of human actions.

The Truman Capote world is quite similar to the McCullers world in that what most of us would take to be normal is presented as monstrous. The "nice people" are sexually abnormal, demented,

or eccentric. The young frequently have the wizened appearance of midgets, civilization is decayed, and everything moves at a strangely lethargic pace.

Paul Bowles's world is bemused. His characters are for the most part morally empty, as though they had moved not only beyond skepticism but almost beyond amorality. They desire some sense of being, but usually they find it only in meaningless violence.

There is also the fact of pastiche. What is original in one author—in Faulkner, for example—can easily become a literary convention. Properly used, the convention can remain vital. Improperly used, it invites pastiche. Eudora Welty is usually in control of her own fictional world, but on occasion, as with "The Burning," she presents Faulknerian grotesques in a manner that seems hardly her own. Miss McCullers and Capote exploit the Southern setting, reminding one of certain Jacobean dramatists who moved beyond Elizabethan tragedy into tragic extravaganza. And perhaps Bowles may be said to be exploiting the fictional world of Joseph Conrad.

Undoubtedly the most significant literature of the grotesque in our time, or at any time, is morally serious. But because of the partial breakdown of Christian orthodoxy and what seems to be our more complicated or possibly more confused sense of human identity, moral decisions seem to us harder to make. In earlier novelists—E. M. Forster, for example—characterization is usually seen in terms of a moral commitment or lack of commitment, of awareness or unawareness. There is little doubt about the nature of the characters or of the moral struggle going on.

In Faulkner or in Warren, a moral issue is also central, but the characters seem to be carrying a greater burden of irrationality, and the moral resolution is likely to come, or can come, from an unexpected source. In *Light in August*,

it comes from two unexpected sources: from Lena Grove, one of the simplest, most uncomplicated of characters, and from Gail Hightower, who has lived in isolation with his strange dreams of the past. In *All the King's Men*, the rationalist idealist, Adam Stanton, brings destruction, and a simple old man states the novelist's thesis: "History is blind, but man is not." The corollary to this is that man lives in "an agony of will." The novel ends thus: ". . . But that will be a long time from now, and soon now we shall go out of the house and go into the convulsion of the world, out of history into history and the awful responsibility of Time."

With Faulkner, moral decisions are more clearly in terms of the Christian tradition than they are with Warren. Both writers, however, seem not only troubled by but participant in the sense of man's estrangement, his guilt, and his general sense of meaninglessness. Flannery O'Connor, on the other hand, writes with the assurance that the Christian doctrines of grace, mercy, and redemption are true. Her dramatizations of these doctrines seem incongruous in the context of the society she is describing. Paul Tillich in "Existential Aspects of Modern Art" says:

[T]here are many Christian existentialists; but insofar as they are existentialists they ask the question, show the estrangement, show the finitude, show the meaninglessness. Insofar as they are Christian, they answer these questions as Christians, not as existentialists.<sup>1</sup>

The difference between Faulkner and Warren, and Miss O'Connor is that they only employ elements from the Christian tradition whereas she accepts Christian, or more specially, Catholic orthodoxy. All three are preoccupied with moral issues in a world of violence and amorality.

Probably there is a major distinction

<sup>1</sup>Carl Michalson, ed., *Christianity and the Existentialists* (1956), p. 141.

to be made between the nineteenth-century fiction, even the grotesque in that fiction, and the modern fictional grotesque. In the novels of Jane Austen, of Thackeray, Dickens, George Eliot, James, or Howells, civilization might be said to be a manifestation of natural law. Looking back at their novels we may recall these lines from Wallace Stevens's *Owl's Clover*:

The solid was an age, a period  
With appropriate, largely English furniture  
Barbers with charts of the only possible  
modes,  
Cities that would not wash away in the  
mist . . .

A generation or two later, with Conrad, Joyce, and Mrs. Woolf, civilization has quite a different look. In their fiction we sometimes seem to be seeing cities (the symbols of civilization) as though they were under water. In a good deal of American fiction the city appears as a destructive force (this is true as far back as *McTeague* and *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*), a mechanical wilderness or a jungle (Algren's *The Man with the Golden Arm*), a maze ("The Artificial Nigger" in O'Connor's *A Good Man Is Hard to Find*), a place of frightening purlieus and back alleys (Faulkner's *Sanctuary* or Algren's *A Walk on the Wild Side*), or a stage set (West's *The Day of the Locust*). More often than not there are small town or rural settings. These phenomena may be fortuitous. More likely there is a reason for them—namely, that the city is no longer a symbol of civilization, and civilization is no longer natural law. For Freud, man was "an inextricable tangle of culture and biology." For the creators of the modern fictional grotesque the biological seems in one sense or another to be primary.

The history of philosophy is a history of the setting up of categories, as well as the history of posing problems and solving them. But categories, as we all know, have a way of not being absolute.

Our rational selves want the category, want it fixed and stable. But we also want to recognize the ironic, the paradoxical, the ambiguous, the conflict of equal or almost equal claims. It is not fortuitous that the terms *irony*, *paradox*, *ambiguity*, *synthesis*, *tension*, and so many others are the staple terms of modern criticism. They are ways of saying that categories merge, break down, that elements from one category have an odd way of turning up in neighboring or distant categories.

A frequent, possibly an essential, factor in the literature of the grotesque—of the sort that is morally serious, not wilfully monstrous—is that one category or an element from one category erupts inside another category. In Faulkner's *Addie Bundren*, for example, one sees a woman trying desperately to find her sense of significant being in conduct (her relationship to her children, her adultery, her general disregard of the proprieties) that also seems perverse. We come to admire, or almost to admire her perversity. The family (those members with "good motives") persist in maintaining their part in the nightmarish, seemingly disrespectful funeral journey out of respect for their dead mother. Anse Bundren is the very voice of propriety in his open respect for Addie's wishes (we have no reason to believe he is insincere in this), but he uses the funeral journey as a means of getting himself a new set of teeth and a new wife. Faulkner's *Light in August* is filled with the same sort of grotesques: Simon McEachern, Eupheus Hines, and Percy Grimm, those avatars of righteousness, are all monstrous. Grotesque too is the relationship of Joanna Burden and Joe

Christmas—she, dreaming of the New England Biblical hell and basically incapable of affection, making violent love to Joe Christmas, who in turn hates himself, hates her, and yet enjoys her as a phenomenon.

The most determinedly idealistic figures in Robert Penn Warren's novels find themselves performing cynical and base acts, usually with the utmost assurance of their own righteousness. We see lies serving good ends, and truths bringing destruction. We hear a character say that you can use the point of virtue upon which a man most prides himself to bring about his destruction. And Warren's fictional world presents the ambiguity of moral actions in an intensely moralistic tone.

In Flannery O'Connor's fictional world, to take one more example, one finds Catholic orthodoxy erupting inside an amoral commercialism and an ill-defined and sometimes not very vigorous Protestantism. The consequences are such strange and perverse villains as *The Misfit* and the *Bible salesman*, and that grotesque saint, *Hazel Motes*.

Modern literature has sought to incorporate the anti-poetic into the traditionally poetic, the cowardly into the heroic, the ignoble into the noble, the realistic into the romantic, the ugly into the beautiful. In our literature as well as in our art, we have heightened and have stylized the anti-poetic, the cowardly, the ignoble, the realistic, the ugly. The grotesque, heightened and stylized, simultaneously affronts our sense of established order and satisfies, or partly satisfies, our need for at least a tentative, a more flexible ordering.

# Resistance to Change in Language Teaching

JOHN C. McGALLIARD

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Change is always resisted when it requires new efforts and attitudes. Resistance to some kinds of change is sound sense. The late G. L. Kittredge used to say that he would not want to eat an unconventional baked potato. In a more serious area, recent events indicate that we ought to have resisted the intellectual deterioration of the high school curriculum during the last thirty years. Clouds of witnesses, sometimes armed with tables and statistics, assured us that courses in English grammar failed to improve the writing of their students. This testimony seldom included reliable description of the *kind* of grammar taught or of the method of teaching it, to say nothing of the results achieved in the course itself. And few investigations—so far as I know—probed the relationship between ability to analyze complicated sentences and ability to read texts made up of such sentences with accurate comprehension. Nevertheless, we—or our predecessors in the occupation—responding to many kinds of pressure, gradually gave up the systematic teaching of grammar. For it we substituted a half-hearted attempt to teach “usage”—I quote the word. In my judgment, this *failure* of resistance to change was calamitous. The result is a generation of semi-illiterate people—I am thinking of reading even more than writing—semi-illiterate people furnished with a high school or junior college diploma. If the only choice before us were a choice between the systematic grammar of fifty years ago, with its meta-

physical premises, ideological definitions, authoritarian tone, and prescriptive tyranny—if the choice were between that, on the one hand, and what takes its place in the majority of schools today, on the other, then I should vote for the old-fashioned grammar. Of course, this is *not* the choice which confronts us. I am simply emphasizing a truism: in language teaching, as in other things, resistance to change is not, in itself, either good or bad, wise or unwise. That depends on what change is resisted. During the rest of my time I shall talk about changes that seem to me valid and desirable. I shall try to suggest some of the reasons why they are sometimes resisted.

The territory divides rather naturally into two areas. One includes standards of correctness; the other includes fundamental principles of grammatical analysis. Examples of the first would be the status of such constructions as “It is him,” etc.; “who” instead of “whom” in some or all contexts; “like” as a conjunctive in some contexts; the plural after “each,” “anybody,” etc., etc. Here I should put also certain “past tense” forms of the verb: “sprung,” e.g., and the use of all forms of “lay” instead of the corresponding forms of “lie.” I am not trying to defend or oppose any of these patterns, whether conservative or radical. But how do we decide which patterns are good English and which are not? One group of teachers attempts to apply logical analysis, or else invokes authority—the authority of

a textbook revered in previous decades—or does both of these things. "The verb *to be* takes the same case after it as before it; therefore 'it is me' must be wrong and 'it is I' is the only correct pattern." Or, "*lie* is an intransitive verb; *lay* is a transitive verb; accordingly, one can go and 'lie down' but not 'lay down.'" "'*Who* do you mean?' is incorrect and '*Whom* do you mean?' is correct—because the pronoun is the object of the verb and the objective form of this pronoun is *whom*."

Now the motives which produce this attitude are excellent. These teachers are striving valiantly to maintain standards. One can understand their conviction that if "rules" are valid in other situations, then those just illustrated are also valid. Certainly a young man or woman would not be likely to be employed in any "white collar" job if, in the initial interview or letter of application, he said, for example, "Us kids don't none of us know much grammar." The teachers about whom I am talking are keenly aware of this handicap. They are trying to insure their pupils against just this sort of misfortune. Battling daily against rusticity, as our eighth-century predecessor Alcuin put it, they are disturbed in their labors by rumors of iconoclasm, heresy, and free-thinking among linguists and other public monitors. Some of them apparently believe that modern linguists are opposed to all standards, holding that "Whatever is said is right." This impression is mostly based on hearsay, on second or third hand, erroneous information. Part of it, however, may be due to unsound inference from the linguists' attack upon the mistaken rules and precepts found in some textbooks. At all events, these teachers feel that the ground is being cut from under their feet by the very people who should sustain and support them.

Of course, all this is a regrettable misunderstanding. Partly, it is a misunder-

standing of the *social* criterion of standard English. This, say the linguists, is the only feasible, realistic, practical criterion. To discover it and identify it, they do not engross indiscriminately the language habits of every man. Instead, they take account only of the patterns habitually used by the best educated minority—the people who, on other grounds than their use of the language pattern in question, would be regarded as highly educated people.

The teacher who rejects the criterion of predominant educated use and who seeks to oppose that use by appeal to logic or rule has misconceived the nature of language. He assigns to particular language patterns the same kind of value and validity that he assigns to  $H_2O$  as the formula for water or to 24 as the result of multiplying 8 by 3. He fails to recognize that language patterns are folkways, like the folkways practiced in government or costume. Strangely enough, in view of his education, he forgets that all folkways vary from people to people, and from generation to generation among the same people. But if the social criterion, rightly understood, is the only feasible final criterion of good English, nevertheless it is more difficult to apply than is a set of "logical" rules set down once for all. We may as well admit this fact. The teacher of modest background and limited horizon may feel less than adequate to independent application of the social criterion at all points—especially if he—or she—has any ingredient of humility. The only remedies I know are better professional education, more extensive reading, wider contacts—and the courage to acknowledge that the status of some patterns is not settled. This last, possibly the most important of all, is the hardest for members of our vocation to achieve. English teachers are expected to be certain about everything. But we can at least refrain from propagating this error by acquiescing in it.

Our second area of resistance—or possible resistance—involves the basic plan on which a grammar is written. In the past most grammars inconsistently combined an ideological or notional framework, in some parts, with a kind of structural framework in others. A noun was defined as "the name of a person, place, thing, quality," etc.; but an adverb was defined as "a word that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb." The grammar promoted and written by "structural" linguists employs exclusively "structural" types of framework or formulation, though not necessarily of the kind just quoted. Thus a noun is identified as a word that could replace *janitor* in the utterance "The janitor cleans the building." And it may be identified also as a word with certain characteristics, called "markers." Thus a noun is a word that can vary as *janitor* varies in the utterance "The janitors clean the building"; or in the way represented by "the janitor's overalls." A sentence is not defined as a "complete thought" but as "an utterance not included by its framework in the structure of another utterance." Such included elements—what have been called participial phrases and subordinate clauses, etc.—are identified by connectives like "though," "since," "who," "which," etc. My illustrations are very inadequate. On the other hand, the apology for offering them at all is the relative newness of thoroughgoing grammars of this kind.

Perhaps because of its recent advent—or perhaps because of my cloistered existence—I have not encountered much resistance to structural grammar. The only objections that I have actually heard or read are these: that it is too difficult; that beginning teachers lack training in linguistics of any kind, especially "structural"; and that suitable school texts are exceedingly few. As to the first of these objections, I suspect that we may be confusing difficulty with unfamiliarity. Any moderately elaborate

system will seem difficult as long as it is strange. It will take those of us who are accustomed to traditional grammars a little while to become equally handy with, say, Professor Fries's Class 1, 2, 3, and 4 words, "immediate constituents," etc. This is a handicap not shared by most of our students; they, of course, are not acquainted with *any* system of grammar. And, of course, if we have not been teaching systematic grammar of any kind, then teaching structural grammar will require some fresh effort from us and from our pupils.

This effort is not excessive. The danger is that it may be made to appear excessive. For some years the textbook which the student carries to his English class has been getting bigger and bigger. Apparently the authors imitate the policy of platform writers in election years: they try to be all things to all children; they ignore no faction or splinter group of teachers. How long has it been since you took a class actually *through* the textbook? How many have you read through yourself? Of course, this outsize bulk is generally the result of combining grammar, style, and copious models of extended composition all in the same book. The structural gist of the English language, if included, is buried and lost in a 700-page omnibus volume. (Well, 700 pages in college texts; 400 in high school books.) If the teacher is to regain or the student is to acquire a proper conception of English grammar, this will have to be changed. We need a series of books that are grammars and nothing else. These books should be clear, concise, attractive, and, above all, brief. They should be adapted to various stages of the pupil's maturity. I am not qualified to say how many different texts are needed between the sixth and the twelfth grades. But each of them can be and should be short—certainly less than 200 pages, perhaps much less. In this way time will be left for all the other things—from punctuation to elegance—with

which the English teacher must deal.

Return, Aristarchus; the dread voice is past—for the moment. The lack of linguistic training in the teacher can be supplied nowadays by summer school courses in General Linguistics and in English Grammar. Of course, you have to select an institution where structural patterns are not ignored. At this point I will mention a query that many must have voiced, although I happen not to have heard them. What about the differences among the structuralists themselves, whether of terminology or of analysis itself? Must we exchange nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs for a four-class grammatical society? Or can we keep the old terms—these four and many others—only apply them as parts of a structural framework? The latter is my own view; but every teacher should look at the facts and decide for himself. Again, everyone now agrees—that is, every structuralist, so far as I know—on the importance of the intonation pattern of the spoken sentence. But they do not all agree about its specific features—pauses, junctures, transitions, degrees of stress, varieties of pitch, and—finally—clause finals. What's the poor teacher to do? Pay her money and take her choice? Give up and let the whole thing go? No! Rejoice that there is something not yet cut and dried! Get in on the fight; collect your own evidence; participate—however modestly—in the advance of knowledge. That phrase, the advance of

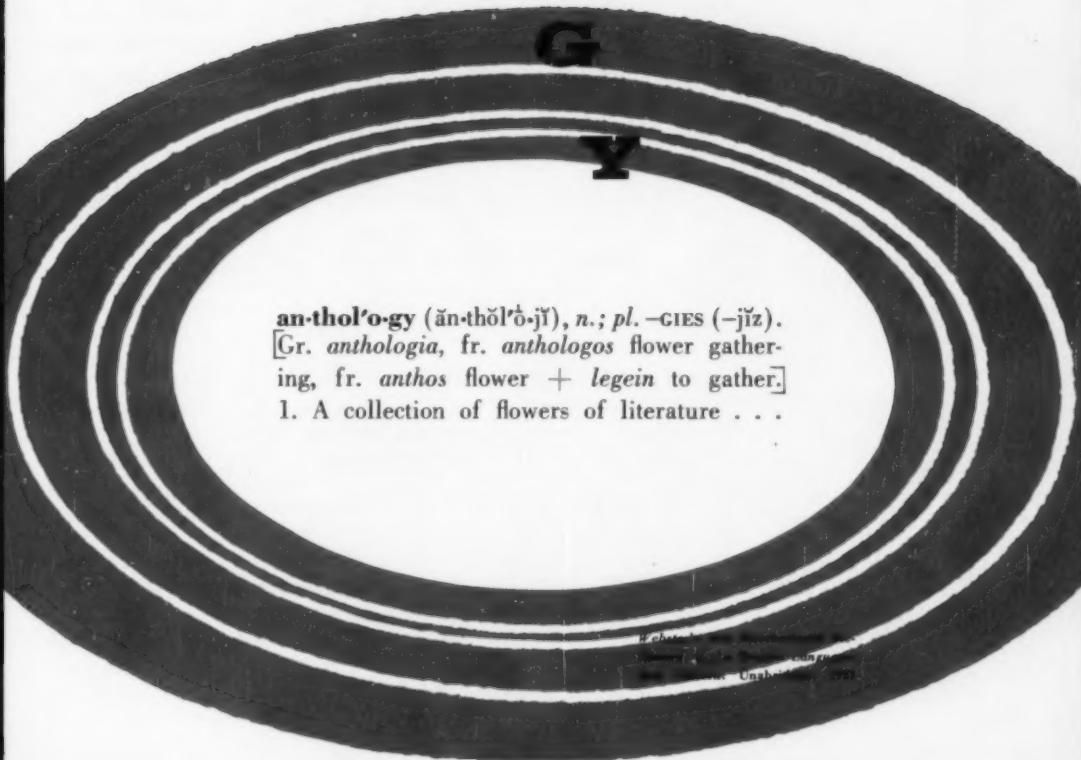
knowledge, suggests another query. What about the massive labors of Curme and Jespersen and the other authors of monumental, unabridged grammars of English and other languages? Would the structural linguist scrap the lot, jettison the whole cargo? No; these great storehouses of English usage, in its immense variety, remain as useful as ever. The modern linguist would simply revise some of the definitions and classifications. (Prescription of usage, you remember, is rarely the enterprise of an unabridged grammar.)

So far we have been considering motives of resistance that could be called more or less objective; I conclude with the briefest glance at a few that are subjective. Some teachers, I am told, fear that new doctrine may upset old authority—their authority as previously exercised. Some resent the obligation to unlearn anything that they ever learned. Re-enforcing both of these, of course, is our universal human inertia. Alone or in combination, these motives may lead us to act as though we were committed to a philosophy or policy or program. When it is challenged, we first bristle up and then dig in deeper. Refutation, instead of convincing, strengthens us in our obstinacy. This is a melancholy social pattern—well documented, I may add, by scholars far outside our field. Of course, no member of the NCTE fits this pattern of irrationality. But just take another look at some of your colleagues.

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*Questions on English usage may be sent to the chairman of the NCTE Committee on Current English, Professor Margaret M. Bryant, 1 Montague Terrace, Brooklyn 1, N. Y.*

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**an-thol'o-gy** (ăn-thôl'ĕ-jî), *n.*; *pl.* -GIES (-jîz).  
[Gr. *anthologia*, fr. *anthologos* flower gathering,  
fr. *anthos* flower + *legein* to gather.]  
1. A collection of flowers of literature . . .

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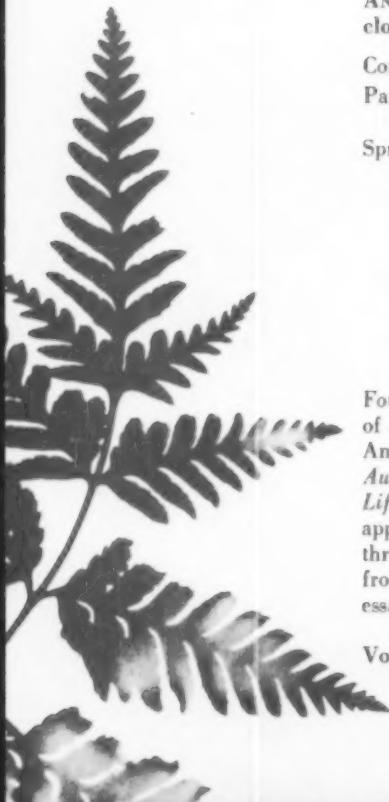
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REVIEWS

## Round Table

*Antigone: "THE MOST MISREAD OF ANCIENT PLAYS"*

RICHARD E. AMACHER

The writer, an associate professor at the Alabama Polytechnic Institute, did undergraduate work at Oberlin and Ohio University and graduate work at the Universities of Chicago and Pittsburgh, and taught at Rutgers and Henderson S.T.C. (Arkansas). Dr. Amacher is the editor of Franklin's *Wit and Folly* and the author of numerous items in *The Explicator*. (College English will be unable to accept rebuttal on this contribution to one of the most debatable of ancient controversies.)

Next to *Oedipus Rex*, *Antigone* is undoubtedly Sophocles' best-known tragedy.<sup>1</sup> Most commentators on this play have assumed that the highly courageous girl who gives her life for the cause of her brother's burial is the protagonist. In the May issue of *College English* Professor Norman Friedman questions this reading that sees Antigone as protagonist. He suggests that Creon may be the "main mover of the action" as well as the person to whom the concluding catastrophe occurs. Several other scholars have written briefly to the same effect.<sup>2</sup> The time has come for a decision on the brief but excellent suggestions of Professor Friedman and the small group of scholars who take the same position.

Kitto's *Greek Tragedy* tells of a production he once witnessed at Glasgow in 1922, where, to his surprise, Creon rather than Antigone dominated the play. Such shift in emphasis was not due to bad acting or faulty production, according to Kitto, although one critic objected to the elaborate *cortège* accompanying Haemon's body back to the stage because it changed the center of the play's construction from Antigone to Creon. Last year in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, I saw a student production of the play which was well acted and capably directed, and I came away with a similar feeling to that of Kitto. I began to wonder if Profes-

sor Hadas had not been correct in stating that *Antigone* is "the most misread of ancient plays."

As evidence that Creon dominates the play Kitto notes that Creon's part is half again as long as Antigone's. Admitting that quantitative measurements of this sort may not always be reliable, he goes on to argue that Creon's is the more dynamic of the two parts. It is more dynamic, he says, because Antigone's fate is decided almost immediately, while Creon's is prolonged, most of the dramatic forces in the play being directed against him. For proof that Creon faces antagonistic forces throughout the play Kitto presents the following eight points: (1) the slight reserve with which the chorus receives Creon's edict (lines 211-214); (2) the news of his being defied, especially by a woman (in a later work, *The Greeks* [1951], pp. 219-236, Kitto debunks the idea that the status of Greek women was remarkably lower than that of men); (3) the opposition of Haemon to Creon, which brings the conflict into the family; (4) the disapproving voices of the city, which Haemon reports to Creon; (5) the appearance of Teiresias, announcing the supernatural opposition; (6) the opposition of the chorus (line 1098); (7) the foreshadowed death of Haemon (Teiresias predicts two deaths, saying that one will be that of Creon's son); and (8) the unforeseen death of Eurydice. According to Kitto, the opposition to Antigone is nothing like that to Creon in terms of dramatic development. It is true, of course, that as the child of Oedipus, Antigone has been singled out by the gods for an unhappy fate. Also, she disobeys the law of Creon. But in terms of dramatic development her

<sup>1</sup>I am indebted for my title to Moses Hadas, *A History of Greek Literature* (1950), p. 87.

<sup>2</sup>See E. F. Watling, *Sophocles: The Theban Plays* (1957), p. 167; H. J. Muller, *The Spirit of Tragedy* (1956), p. 80; W. K. Prentice, *Those Ancient Dramas Called Tragedies* (1942), pp. 82, 85; Hadas, pp. 87-88; and H. D. F. Kitto, *Greek Tragedy* (2nd rev. ed., 1950), pp. 123-128.

tragedy is comparatively swift, if terrible. Creon's, on the other hand, "grows before our eyes. . . ." Kitto also argues that (1) Creon monopolizes the end of the play, Antigone being scarcely mentioned in the last two or three scenes; (2) the introduction of Eurydice at the end of the play focuses attention on Creon's tragedy; (3) the *Antigone* resembles the *Ajax* in the use of two strong central characters, although Kitto affirms that to Sophocles, at least, Creon was the more significant; and (4) the Greeks themselves felt confusion about the central character because of the title.<sup>3</sup>

Although I am in substantial agreement with many of the points in Kitto's argument, it seems to me that one great weakness in his position is that he does not make clear what critical principles he is using. "Purely formal criticism of Sophocles, by rules, is an impertinence," he writes. He then tells a story about the composer Schumann, who, when asked what one of his compositions meant, sat down at the piano and played it again. "The form was the meaning; and so it is with Sophocles . . .," says Kitto, adding that "Form with him [Sophocles] is the same as thought; he did not need lessons from Aristotle."

If, as Kitto says, Sophocles did not need lessons from Aristotle, we still might be justified in employing Aristotelian principles to test Kitto's analysis of the play. Certainly Kitto errs in assuming that what he calls "Aristotelianism" makes Antigone the protagonist. My purpose is to show that by use of Aristotle's principles concerning plot structure in the *Poetics* it is possible to arrive at a conclusion similar to that of Kitto's contention that Creon is the protagonist.

Aristotle stresses the importance of plot in tragedy. For him the plot, or action, is the most important part of tragedy. In-

<sup>3</sup>See Hadas, pp. 87-88, for the idea that Creon was the more significant character not only to Sophocles but also to the Greek audience of his time. Prentiss offers (p. 85) this explanation of the title of *Antigone*: "the titles of these plays . . . do not in all cases indicate the chief character. The titles seem to have been chosen primarily to indicate what legend was the basis of the play." Euripides's *Alcestis*, for example, is about Admetus, he says. And, of course, we might add that Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* is primarily about Brutus.

deed, he calls it the "soul" of tragedy.<sup>4</sup> For this reason my argument is based primarily on the plot structure of *Antigone* rather than on character, thought, diction, song, or spectacle, the other and less important parts of tragedy enumerated by Aristotle.

The ideal tragedy described in the *Poetics* (XIII-XIX) should have a complex rather than a simple plot and should arouse pity and fear. Plots are complex if they contain either reversal or discovery. And pity and fear are best aroused by the "inner" or logical structure of the play. For the person who hears the tale should "thrill with horror or melt with pity" at what takes place, as in the *Oedipus*. Hence pity and fear must be impressed on, or rise from, the incidents themselves. Pity and fear will be most effectively aroused "when the tragic incident occurs between those who are near and dear to one another," when brother kills brother (*The Seven Against Thebes*), when son kills father (*Oedipus*). For example, when Creon says that he has unwittingly killed his wife, pity (a feeling for unmerited misfortune) is aroused, because these two persons are near and dear to each other. Similarly, it is aroused by Oedipus's action in killing his own father unknowingly. While we feel pity for Antigone, the emotional effect is not as poignant, since Creon is not related to her.

By tragic incident Aristotle means a destructive or painful action "such as death on the stage, bodily agony, wounds, and the like." He lists four kinds of tragic incident: (1) the protagonist acts consciously, as where Medea deliberately slays her children; (2) he acts unwittingly, as where Oedipus kills his father and sleeps with his mother unknowingly, discovering the tie of kinship later; (3) he is "about to act with knowledge of the persons" and then does not act; (4) he "is about to do an irreparable deed through ignorance and makes the discovery before the deed is done." Creon's execution of Antigone is certainly a conscious act. But to some extent it is committed in ignorance, for Creon has no idea of the terrible consequences of his action. When he does begin to sense

<sup>4</sup>*Poetics*, VI, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14. This and all succeeding references are to the Butcher translation.

them, through Teiresias's revelation, he immediately tries to right matters; but it is too late. The deaths of Haemon and Eurydice, which are also tragic incidents, are consecutive results of the deaths of Antigone and Haemon in a cause-effect sequence.

Handling of tragic incident by the dramatist may be characterized by four degrees of goodness, according to Aristotle: (1) *Least good* is the action in which one is about to act, knowing the persons, and then does not. Aristotle says this degree is the worst, for it is shocking without being tragic—no disaster follows it. He presents Haemon's threatening to kill Creon as an example. (2) *Better* is conscious perpetration of the deed (*Medea*). (3) *Still better* is perpetration in ignorance and discovery afterward (*Oedipus*). (4) *Best* is the kind where the character is about to perpetrate the deed and makes the discovery just before doing so (*Cresphontes* and *Iphigenia in Tauris*). Although Creon's action seems to be most like the secondary category, it partakes to some extent of the third in that the consequences of the deed are discovered afterward, and to that extent the deed might be said to be committed at least partly in ignorance.

Besides tragic incident the two other main parts of plot for Aristotle are reversal and discovery. In the *Antigone* the discovery occurs when Creon, under the united efforts of Teiresias and the chorus, recognizes that he must live by the laws of heaven instead of by the laws of the state. Aristotle defines discovery as "a change from ignorance to knowledge producing love or hate between the persons destined by the poet for good or bad fortune." Thus Creon is forced to admit that Antigone was right, and obviously this admission affects his feelings for her for the better. Creon's later discovery takes the form of recognizing that he has unknowingly caused the deaths of the two persons nearest and dearest to him—Haemon and Eurydice. This much for discovery or recognition. "Reversal of Intention is a change by which the action veers round to its opposite." Aristotle explains that such a change must be subject to the rule of probability or necessity. Properly to locate a reversal in a tragedy, one must be able to define the

main action, for it is this element that reverses itself. If we think of the defeat of Antigone by Creon as this action, it will be seen to reverse itself at that point where Teiresias appears and persuades Creon of the consequences to come—two deaths, one to be that of his son. Fearing this event, for Teiresias has never been wrong, Creon makes the discovery of his previous ignorance and the plot reverses itself. Such coincidence of reversal and discovery constitutes the best form of discovery, says Aristotle. Thus the plot of *Antigone* is complex rather than simple, because it depends on reversal and discovery. I presume that the kind of discovery (Aristotle seems to differentiate between form and kind of discovery) would be that mentioned in XVI, 8, for it is through a chain of previous incidents in the play that the supernatural signs, made known to Teiresias, come to have their meaning for Creon and point to the reversal.

One of the strongest arguments against Antigone's being the protagonist of this play is that she is not intimately involved in the discovery or reversal of the plot. So far as I know, Aristotle gives no example of a play in which the protagonist makes no discovery, although he does say plots may be simple, that is, without either discovery or reversal. One might argue, of course, that *Antigone* has a simple plot. But if one does, the problems raised by Kitto in the early part of this article will most certainly have to be met, leading to the conclusion that *Antigone* is a bad play, structurally speaking. If we assume, however, that we have a complex plot, as I firmly believe, the question about Antigone's part in the discovery and reversal will lead to a different judgment of the play. What, it might be asked, does Antigone discover? That she is right? No, for she is already dead. The last we see of her, the contest between her and Creon hangs in doubt. Any discovery she makes would thus have to happen so early in the play as to be rather pointless. And, as for reversal, she cannot participate in it for the same reason. One might think that her change from good fortune to bad fortune constitutes the reversal. But Aristotle makes clear that change of fortune for the character is not the same as reversal of the

action. Reversal is a matter of the direction of the plot, considered as a whole, rather than of any bad fortune that might happen to a character. Thus I rest my case for Creon as protagonist of this play on the proposition that the protagonist must participate directly in such important plot matters as discovery and reversal when these are present, as they are in a complex plot.

Three other matters deserve notice. First, it may be argued that the historical materials used by Sophocles, and well known to the Greeks, may have dictated the peculiar form of this play, Antigone being considered the protagonist. If this is true, then we would have what I would call a bad play, and with the tremendous Greek disposition toward unity in all things, such a performance on the part of Sophocles would seem strange indeed. Second, it seems to me that Aristotle's remarks on characterization in *Poetics XV* do not bear essentially on our problem. Under four headings he says that character must be morally good, appropriate, true to life, and consistent. He also says it must follow the law of probability or necessity. Obviously one can say that Antigone's character is morally better than Creon's. But her moral superiority does not give her any greater claim to the position of protagonist as such. (Compare the similar

relations of the protagonist and Macduff in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.) Third, and finally, there are people who find the play unsatisfactory because they do not accurately assess Creon's character. Even Kitto errs slightly about Creon's character, I believe. Kitto describes Creon as "unyielding." Others regard Creon as inconsistent, because after insisting he will not yield, he does yield. He yields to Teiresias and the chorus, because they scare him. Creon says he will not yield even if the eagles carry Polyneices' body up to the throne of Zeus. The point, however, is that he does yield. And such yielding, following as it does his extravagant assertions that he will not yield, shows not his inconsistency, I would say, but rather his disposition to bluster (a trait noted by Professor Friedman), as well as his conscientious attitude toward the administration of the state—not to mention the fact that Creon gives every appearance of a man forced into severities he had not had the foresight to consider. Basically he represents a perfect type of the tragic hero as delineated in the *Poetics* (XIII, 3), a highly prosperous man, neither eminently good nor villainously bad, whose fall is brought about by some flaw. Creon's flaw illustrates very well the Greek concept of *hamartia*, a mental error which may be fully as blame-worthy and as deadly as a moral one.

#### SEMINAR IN ADVANCED COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS

CARL LEFEVRE

*The author of a variety of articles—on Byron, on Gogol, and on survey courses—is an associate professor at Chicago Teachers College. His degrees are from Western Michigan University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Minnesota, and he has taught at Minnesota, Washington University, Mankato State, and Pace College.*

This article describes the author's teaching of a course he helped to design for senior students of business and accounting in a liberal arts college. The principles and techniques, however, appear to be applicable to other settings—including business, industry, and government—where there is need for practical improvement in skills of problem-solving and reporting.

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ual and group reports, oral and written. It aims at a mature introduction to semantics, with special attention to slanting in newspapers and magazines; the main assignments involve techniques of isolating, analyzing, and solving problems, especially those that require processes of communication for their solution, such as questionnaires and interviews. Most of the problems are originated by the students themselves, subject to the instructor's approval. The course also provides a good scrubbing up on fundamen-

tals of speech and writing at the outset. Impromptu papers and talks during the opening week, supplemented by outside papers, prepared talks, and tape and disc recordings throughout the course, give point to this scrub function. So far as student preparation and ability allow, however, performance is on an advanced level of communication, integrally related to problem-solving.

The work is divided into three general categories, taken up in the following order: (1) Thinking Effectively: Study of Semantics and Slanting. (2) Applying for a Job. Role Acting the "I" and the "You." (3) Solving a Problem by Means of Verbal Communication Techniques. There is no textbook, although the students are expected to own and refer to a writing handbook and a good dictionary. Students are prepared for their assignments by lectures and discussion, supplemented by current business publications and articles on communication, semantics, and the perennial problem of applying successfully for a job. Such materials from the world of business are often intrinsically excellent, and English teachers will recognize their practical appeal to students of business and engineering.

#### 1. Thinking Effectively: Study of Semantics and Slanting.

We begin the study of semantics by discussing selected problems and examples. Then each student writes a critical review of an approved book in the general area of semantics and logic, such as Hummel and Huntress, *The Analysis of Propaganda*; Hayakawa, *Language in Thought and Action*; Johnson, *People in Quandaries*; Thouless, *How to Think Straight and Straight and Crooked Thinking*; and Chase, *The Tyranny of Words and The Power of Words*. There does not seem to be any completely satisfactory single work in this area, but possibly Hayakawa's well-known volume is most appreciated by students. For this purpose, a "critical review" is a report of 500-600 words, of which 200-250 may be summary, but the remainder must be evaluation, first in terms of the author's purpose, and finally in terms of the student's needs. His key question is, "Would you recommend this book to a fellow stu-

dent, and why?" If time allows, selected reviews may be read aloud to the class by student-critics as a basis for discussion.

Class work on slanting begins with analysis of articles from current newspapers and periodicals on a wide variety of subjects, including politics, sports, books, and prominent personalities. Then each student brings to class an article of his own choice which he analyzes orally from the platform. Students usually begin to perceive their own built-in slants and biases during this procedure, and many say it is the most far-reaching intellectual experience of the course for them. In sum, the project is intended to make each student aware of slanting in everyday life, so that he can better evaluate what he reads and hears, and is intended also to clarify his own thinking with particular reference to his own speech and writing. By the end of the course the students joke merrily and with considerable sophistication about their own biases and those of classmates.

#### 2. Applying for a Job: Role Acting the "I" and the "You"

Originally, many seniors taking this course requested instruction in writing letters of application; from that beginning the project grew into an important element of the course, second only to the solving of a major problem. The project develops in two stages: (1) preparing a data sheet of personal and professional information and writing a letter applying for a position advertised in the classified section of a newspaper; and (2) a role-acting procedure in which the students form imaginary companies, write personnel advertisements, and then follow through on writing application letters and conducting interviews for the advertised positions; thus each student has a job interview in which he seeks a position in another company, and also participates as an employer in interviewing applicants for a position in his own company. Aside from the general experience gained in interviewing and being interviewed in a critically important situation, the student learns to make the crucial distinction between the "I" attitude and the "you" attitude in the employer-employee relationship. He learns that he must offer something that the employer wants, and

not merely seek what he wants as applicant. Only a very obtuse person could play the role of an employer seeking definite qualifications in an employee and not lose some of his naive egoism as a job-seeker solely interested in himself and his needs. Applying successfully for a job requires a high order of salesmanship, and nothing less.

In Stage 1 of the job-application project, each student chooses a classified advertisement for a position that interests him. He then prepares a single data sheet concisely presenting in a tabular form the salient points of personal and professional information an employer would want. Given intelligent selection and presentation of items, plus immaculate neatness and precision, such a data sheet is efficient, has sales appeal, and may be used for more than one opening of the same kind. When he has prepared a good data sheet, the student is ready to write the application letter itself, embodying good selling points and generally exemplifying his mastery of the "you" attitude.

The application letter enlarges a little, persuasively, on pertinent items from the data sheet, seeks to sharpen the employer's desire to interview the applicant and to make it easy and convenient to do so. The object of such a letter is not to get the job, of course, but to get an interview. If the applicant fails to get an interview, he suffers immediate and total defeat. Our practice with the first set of application letters, written in response to actual classified advertisements, is to scrutinize both letter and data sheet very closely and criticize them rigorously. Afterward we spend at least one full class period analyzing them in detail and at length, making full use of the opaque projector, a device similar to a television set in its effect on students. They love it and learn prodigiously. Their learning must be demonstrated, however, in thorough corrections and revisions of their letters and accompanying data sheets.

Once the students have had the book-training described above, they are ready for something more interesting. Depending somewhat on the number in the class, they can be organized into groups of three to five, each group representing an imaginary company seeking new employees. Before

writing an advertisement, each company is required to prepare a carefully written statement describing the business in full, including physical plant, capitalization, personnel of various categories, products, sales volume, benefits enjoyed by employees, and so on. After each company has organized itself in this way, the officers write an advertisement for a position they must fill, and all these advertisements are "published" for the class in mimeographed or dittoed form in a class newspaper.

The other side of the procedure now begins. Using a *nom de guerre* divulged only to his professor, each student writes a letter applying for one of the advertised positions; after these letters are checked in they are given to the officers of the designated companies. Following consultation among themselves, the officers call in all applicants for a general briefing, and finally interview each applicant alone before the class, while the others wait outside the room. Thus the officers of each company constitute an interviewing committee, and they eventually screen all applicants and make a final choice, which they explain to the class as a whole.

The instruction necessary to launch this role-acting project is accomplished by lecture and discussion, the students acquiring most of what they learn by direct experience and observation of their classmates. They know that they are not given grades for their performances of roles in this project, but the atmosphere is one of mutual criticism—friendly but really critical—and the whole affair can be conducted in a spirit of serious self-evaluation. Advice to them on how to conduct an interview covers two main points, *Etiquette* and *Business*, and runs about as follows.

*Etiquette.* Remember that the applicant is a human being in a somewhat awkward situation. Nothing will be lost and a great deal may be gained, if both friendliness and courtesy prevail. Put the applicant at ease in opening introductions of officers. Provide sufficient briefing, or general orientation, to break the ice and get the interview under way smoothly. Be sure to allow the applicant ample opportunity to ask questions and volunteer comments as the discussion proceeds. Bring the interview to a courteous but definite formal conclusion,

making a clearly understood arrangement to let the applicant know the outcome of your consideration.

**Business.** Underneath the courteous amenities of business tact and diplomacy, the serious object of the interview is to form a qualified opinion of the candidate's entire personality. What is involved is an exacting personal-professional judgment. You want to discover whether the applicant has poise, mental agility, candor, the requisite knowledge, adequate experience, adaptability, and other special traits and qualifications. This is your chance to observe your man in action. The question you must determine is, "Does he fit?" The interviewers must be satisfied on experience, education, and aptitude for the work in general, and for this position in particular, in a definite company involving specific individual men. It is a little like adding a new member to your family. Employing a new person also means a large investment of money, time, and energy. Make the investment a sound one on all counts.

The students seem to learn a great deal of what is involved on both sides of the job-interview desk from this project. They usually develop their potentials as applicants, as they frequently testify after successful real-life interviews. At its best, this classroom experience has about it that air of subdued excitement that characterizes our work when students and teacher alike know that something worthwhile is happening.

### 3. Solving a Problem by Means of Verbal Communication Techniques

Early in the course the students are told that during the second half each will submit a written report on a major project of his own choosing, and also that each student will make an eight- to ten-minute disc-recorded talk based on some of the interesting highlights or sidelights of his project. The talk is by no means a reading of the paper, or even an oral version of it; the talk must be specifically adapted to the audience and to the allotted time. This entire assignment, report and speech, is by far the most difficult of the course, and is usually the most interesting as well.

"A problem that can be solved by means of verbal communication techniques" is

one involving interviews and questionnaires, basically, but that is not a narrow limitation, and in practice a great variety of subjects are taken. The one kind of problem categorically ruled out is the library investigation, though students may combine reading with the other methods. The search for suitable topics begins with lecture and class discussion, illustrated by a number of papers from previous classes. The very process of finding a topic can be a fruitful experience. Discussion of the importance of topics, defining and analyzing problems, locating available sources, and improvising specific techniques of investigation lead to exchanges of ideas and stimulation that help the students begin to do some constructive thinking. They are encouraged to investigate problems involved in their jobs, and in the ensuing discussions they often become aware of the existence of real problems awaiting solution. Sometimes these projects contribute importantly to the student's professional growth on his own job. An Evening Division student with a full-time job often finds that his firm will encourage or even sponsor his study. Problems chosen may involve almost anything under the sun, within reason, from "Accounting as a Career for Women" to "The Zip Gun in Juvenile Crime." The same general critical criteria apply equally to one and all. Following are a few interesting examples of report topics.

Occasionally a wag shows up with a semi-humorous proposal that promises too much fun to be turned down, despite the evident levity of the author's intention. Such a problem was worked out in one class by Arthur Bisguier, brilliant chess player and member of the United States team that later met the Russians in Moscow. His topic, soberly carried out by means of questionnaires in conjunction with personal interviews, was entitled "Survey and Evaluation of the Qualities that the Girls of Sarah Lawrence College Find Desirable in the Male Animal." The nicest thing about his problem for him was that when he received his paper back in class, he returned for another weekend at Sarah Lawrence College to interpret his findings to the respondents. This, however, is atypical.

Another odd topic was, "Why Do Certain Persons Not Own or Watch Television

Sets?" Despite many doubts that any such animal exists, the student found a number of them who were quite willing to testify. They stated, in substance, that television carries the movement toward spectator sports too far. They felt that they had concerns of their own to follow, and that having a television set in the home and watching it would interfere seriously with life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This problem illustrates an almost ideal "universe," as the marketing research people call it: since only persons who refused to own and watch television sets were eligible as respondents, there was no doubt what they represented, though possibly some question might have been raised as to the proportion they constituted of the total number of such persons. Students are quite likely to want to consider their "universe" the first hundred people they meet, and then want to believe further that their results have some statistical validity. While we cannot use the scientific stratified sampling techniques of the Elmo Roper or Gallup polls, we can try to make sense. My students are required to try very earnestly to do so.

Occasionally a student wants to tackle

a problem despite my judgment that it will not work out; sometimes I approve it on the ground that he may learn as much from such an experience, especially if he is keenly interested in it, as from something more safe and sane. Such an inquiry resulted in a short report entitled "The Unfinished Project." A member of a small investment brokerage house, this student wanted to elicit from a sample of 200 clients the answer to the question, "What effect does the present stock market situation have on your investment plans?" He made up a trial questionnaire and tried it out on twenty clients, who shied at the questions. This good pupil was forced to conclude "that it was not possible for me to get a satisfactory answer . . . because people were suspicious as to the real motives of my questions, and rather thought that I was trying to feel them out for new business." Playing a hunch, then, this same student then chose another topic, "Are Investors Interested in Mutual Funds?" and with the full support of his firm, wrote an excellent report based on 1780 returned questionnaires. The net result was that his firm decided to open up a special department to handle mutual funds.

### FAMOUS LAST WORDS, WITH SOME RED-PENCILED NOTES ON THEM

WILLIAM H. WIATT

*An instructor at Indiana University, Dr. Wiatt has a B.A. and an M.A. from the University of Missouri and a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina. His general fields are the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance.*

1. "Dear Mr. —: I just found that I misread the forty-five minute question, and I've got only two minutes left. I'm sure you'll understand and . . ." *Read each question carefully before you begin to write.*

2. "But I was expecting you to ask . . ." *Answer the question asked, not some question that you may have expected and for which you feel better prepared.*

3. "But I've read the whole book twice, and it's all there . . ." *Never try to summarize the story unless you are specifically told to do so. Few students can escape being strangled by their own narrative; it robs them of time which might better be spent answering the question.*

4. "I just made a couple of little mistakes . . ." *Factual errors raise justifiable doubts in your instructor's mind about the quality of your reading. Precise allusions to persons, places, and incidents indicate that you are thoroughly familiar with the book. Be specific and accurate.*

5. "But I wrote eight whole pages on that question . . ." *Few instructors will insist on a given number of pages for a given essay, but all of them will grade down a paper that is short in content. Length is measured not in numbers of pages or words, but in how much you say and how well you say it. Some short essays are compact and factual; many long answers are so disorganized that they can*

*earn only low grades.*

6. "That's just what you said in class; I know, because I've got it in my notes, and . . ." *Tape recordings of lectures do not make good essay answers. Even if you remember and repeat the very words used by your instructor, you may use them in quite a different way from what he intended when he spoke them. Furthermore, most essay questions are carefully designed to make you think about the work in question or to provoke you into proving that*

*you have thought about it before you came into the examination room.*

7. "I'd like to see you about my grade . . ." *Conferences are often helpful, but students who are more concerned with raising the grade of the last examination than with raising the grade of the next one will surely be disappointed. If you decide that a post-mortem is necessary, read carefully over the blue book and the material covered in the examination before you come in to talk about it.*

### ARTICULATION: A SERMON

ERWIN R. STEINBERG

*Dr. Steinberg, an associate professor at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, is Head of the Department of General Studies at Margaret Morrison Carnegie College. He holds a B.S. and an M.S. from New York State College for Teachers, and a Ph.D. from New York University. The author of articles in the field of English pedagogy and literature, he has been a devoted worker in the Council and in the CCCC. He delivered a version of the following homily at the 1958 NCTE meetings in Pittsburgh.*

The picture that one gets from a review of the literature on articulation is one of considerable activity:

Of the 48 states, 26 (54.2%) have committees, organizations, or agencies for studying, coordinating, and working with problems of public secondary—higher education articulation . . . ; 5 states (10.4%) reported that significant work in school-college articulation had been accomplished although no organized program existed specifically for this purpose . . . ; one state (2.1%) reported that plans were underway for establishing an articulation program. [Since these figures are a year old, we may presume that this program has begun.]<sup>1</sup>

Thus 31 states (66.7%) either have organized articulation programs or in some other way have accomplished "significant work in school-college articulation." In three other states (6.3%) "the entire area of school-college articulation and organizations for its improvement were 'under study' . . ."<sup>2</sup> That brings the total to 34 states (73%).

Actually, the picture shown by the literature is even more impressive than that.

<sup>1</sup>*High School-College Articulation in The United States* (Florida State University, 1958), p. 1. The study was made in the fall of 1957.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1.

For example, although Pennsylvania, Iowa, Tennessee, and West Virginia report no organized program,<sup>3</sup> Bucknell,<sup>4</sup> Iowa State Teachers College, The University of Tennessee, and West Virginia State College either run conferences on articulation or provide consultants for the public schools.<sup>5</sup> Finally, some states have several organizations working at articulation. In Kansas, for example, there is not only a statewide Committee on Coordination of High Schools, Junior Colleges, and Colleges, which holds semi-annual meetings,<sup>6</sup> but also an annual Principal-Freshman Conference and an annual Conference on Composition and Literature in High School and College at the University of Kansas.<sup>7</sup>

Articulation is discussed at national and regional meetings, too. It has been dealt with in every CCCC conference since

<sup>3</sup>*High School-College Articulation in The United States*, pp. 12-21.

<sup>4</sup>*About Bucknell* (Nov. 1957).

<sup>5</sup>"Articulation of Secondary School and College Work," *College Composition and Communication* IX (Oct. 1958), 194.

<sup>6</sup>*High School-College Articulation in The United States*, p. 14.

<sup>7</sup>*Bulletin of Education* (University of Kansas, Feb. 1955).

1950.<sup>8</sup> It probably has been discussed at NCTE meetings since the organization began. Teachers in general and English teachers in particular seem to be busy articulating all over the place.

And yet seventy-five percent of the people teaching English in college do not have the vaguest notion of what really goes on in a high school or what the problems of the high school teacher are! And with all the apparent stir about articulation, few college teachers of English know or really care about it and even fewer are willing to invest any time in it. Too often they are content merely to snort disdainfully about the students that come to them from the high schools.

In one city that I know, for example, of about 100 people teaching English in five different colleges and universities, fewer than half a dozen attend more than one meeting a year of a very active local association of English teachers. What is more, I am sure that the few who do attend are looked upon as rather peculiar by many of their colleagues.

Worse than that, the college people support a vicious double standard. When a college professor of English reports that papers of a group of public school teachers taking an extension course in American literature from him show all kinds of illiteracies,<sup>9</sup> everyone is shocked. In February of 1958, however, William Riley Parker reported in *College English*:

For nine years, as editor of *PMLA*, I frequently corrected spelling, punctuation, and grammar in articles written by [college] English teachers—to say nothing of how often I wished they could be completely rewritten so as to be made readable.<sup>10</sup>

This statement caused no ringing of alarm bells.

Furthermore, the colleges may well be doing a poorer job of teaching some aspects of English than the high schools are.

<sup>8</sup>"Articulation of Secondary School and College Work," *College Composition and Communication*, p. 194.

<sup>9</sup>"Can Our Teachers Read and Write?", James D. Koerner, *Harper's Magazine*, CCXIV (Nov. 1954), 79.

<sup>10</sup>"Afterthoughts on a Profession: Graduate Training in the Humanities Today," p. 197.

In the December 1957 issue of *College English*, J. N. Hook reported:

The May 1957 issue of *College Composition and Communication* carried brief statements from more than forty colleges on certain phases of the freshman English course. These statements were prepared by responsible teachers of college freshmen. I was interested in noting that a few of the authors stated that today's freshmen write worse than yesterday's, a few said that their freshmen may write a little better, and most said or implied that they write about the same.<sup>11</sup>

My own experience supports the evaluation of the majority of the people reporting. Thus, despite the inundation of students which has overpopulated high school classrooms and made it extremely difficult for high school teachers of English to give the kind of instruction they would like to give, high school standards seem not to have been impaired.

There is some evidence, however, that, although the flood has not yet hit the colleges, college standards in recent years have not held up. Recently I saw a set of test scores that was very embarrassing. For the last ten years, a large manufacturing company has been giving standardized tests to the engineers it has hired from colleges and universities, large and small, all over the United States. During that period, the company tested some 6000 graduates within three months of their leaving college. Although the scores in mathematics and engineering show a marked and steady improvement over the ten years, the scores for the verbal tests in the battery show a serious and equally steady decline. In fact, the decline in the verbal scores cancels out the advance in the math and engineering scores. Several other companies are having exactly the same experience. And what is worse, they have not been able to persuade the colleges to take the problem seriously.

Everything that I have said thus far is preparation and support for a very simple suggestion for the improvement of articulation between high schools and colleges. It will improve only when the college professors of English stop sulking in their Gothic

<sup>11</sup>"College English Teachers: Leaders or Critics?" pp. 94-95.

towers, renounce their policy of *apartheid*, and undertake with the high school teachers of English the joint solution of a common problem. High school and college teachers of English are engaged in a single undertaking. The very fact that we use the word *articulation*—with its inescapable suggestion of separate segments—indicates that too many of us have not learned that yet.

High school classes are too large—too often double what they should be. High school teachers—even when they have exactly the same number of degrees as their counterparts in college—do not receive even the modicum of respect accorded college teachers. High school teachers are all but defenseless against parents who insist that students pass from one grade to the next on the basis of attendance rather than achievement and who refuse to allow the teachers to give their Johnny enough homework for him to learn to read the way the teachers think that he ought to

be able to read. College teachers should take a stand here—and it should be a loud and public stand.

If college professors feel that the teaching in the public schools is inadequate, they have the remedy in their own hands. They train all the public school teachers. Let them do a better job of it. And let professors in liberal arts colleges stop blaming the teachers colleges for their own failures. "Only about 20% of all elementary and secondary school teachers [come] from teachers colleges."<sup>12</sup>

Articulation? Yes, but it must be a salvation jointly earned. When one of the sinners not only proves unrepentant but also masquerades as a high priest, surely he needs to be reminded of an earlier warning given to those who say, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me for I am holier than thou."

<sup>12</sup>"Afterthoughts on a Profession," p. 193.

## PAPERBACKS

RANDALL STEWART

*Professor Stewart, Chairman at Vanderbilt, well-known scholar, and frequent contributor to College English, is currently re-editing the American notebooks of Hawthorne.*

When you go into your college bookstore, you find (if it's anything like ours) an amazing assortment of handsome paperbacks. Some of them are a little expensive, but the price of most is reasonable enough. You want to gather them up by the armfuls, put them on your shelves, and start reading (or re-reading). Although a few may be "originals," they are for the most part reprints of classics, or near-classics, or standard works. These handsome paperbacks must be a success: there are so many of them, and their number seems to be increasing all the while. They are a great boon to both the general reader and the student. They are not as a rule used as textbooks. Collateral reading in some cases perhaps, but they are not likely to be subjected to the daily wear-and-tear of classroom use.

But it is not of these less-used, collateral paperbacks that I wish to speak, but of those intended for use in courses. And here again we must all be grateful. The paper-

backs have made available many works hitherto unavailable because they were either too expensive or actually out of print. The teacher has been able to supplement the reading without sending the student to the Library, thereby compelling the Library to spend its money for duplicate copies. The student can have his own book. He can bring it to class and turn to the place.

All of this is enormously to the good, and I should not want to appear unappreciative. I myself rely heavily on paperbacks. But I want to mention a difficulty or two.

I could wish that some of the paperbacks were better edited. Many of them are not edited at all, properly speaking. No dates, no bibliographical history, no notes. The introductions are often excellent, but that seems to be almost the extent of the "editor's" contribution. In a collection of stories, for example, one likes to know the date and place of first printing, the date and title of the first collected volume, and

if the story is here collected for the first time, I see no reason why the editor shouldn't say so. And then there is the text itself. Sometimes the proof-reading has been done, I suspect, by one of the office girls (bless them for their unremitting labors). I have in mind one fictional piece which is so full of typographical errors that I'm sure the distinguished "editor" never saw a proof-sheet. Some of the misprints make the author say (he's a rather difficult author to begin with) just the opposite of what he really said. How confusing!

And there's another matter even more serious: I mean the ephemeral character of the physical book. Students are hard on books, and so are some professors. I remember a young professor who used to throw his armload of books violently (it seemed to me) on the floor of his study after every class. (He later picked them up tenderly, and started doggedly to work on his next lecture.) Students nowadays throw their books into the backs of cars. (Many boys and girls today refuse to go to college without a car, and many vain, doting parents refuse to send them handicapped by the lack of a car.) This daily rough usage is mighty hard on paperbacks. They fall apart, leaf by leaf. A colleague of mine (in another university) told me that toward the end of his course in the Romantic Poets, one boy brought to class just two leaves. The lesson for the day was the "West Wind" and the "Grecian Urn." The boy, unfortunately, could not produce either poem complete. He had the first half of one, and the second half of the other.

But one doesn't have to be a hard user for this sort of thing to happen. I am a gentle user myself, but one of my paperbacks, which I set great store by (despite the typographical errors; in fact I have fun pointing them out), is in a sad state of near-breakdown, after having been used only three times. The pages are now held precariously together by scotch tape. I wrote a lot of work into this volume: bibliographical information, identifications, and the like. Naturally I will hold on to it as long as I can; one can't be looking up these same facts over and over again. But the volume is definitely on its last legs.

This sort of thing gives the teacher pause.

But let the teacher copy out his precious facts into a new paperback, or even look them up all over again—it won't kill him. The situation of the undergraduate is our chief concern.

Many students like to keep their English books. They take them home after graduation. Perhaps they start a little library. I like to think that over the length and breadth of our fair land there are in many homes collections of books, serious books, some of which go back to college days: a collegiate dictionary, the complete plays of Shakespeare, a hard-cover English anthology, a hard-cover American anthology. I like to think of the husband and wife (she immersed in domestic and social cares, he in business cares) in the repose of the late afternoon, perhaps the cocktail hour. She took a good deal of English, he a lot of money and banking, but they may very well have first met in an English class. She takes from the shelf one of those old durable volumes, and reads aloud, over the martinis,

Tell them, dear, if eyes were made for seeing

Then Beauty is its own excuse for being  
or

Equilibrists lie here; stranger, tread light;  
Close, but untouched in each other's  
sight;

Mouldered the lips and ashy the tall skull.  
Let them lie perilous and beautiful.

("A very different kind of poem, isn't it, dear? Which do you like better?"); and the whole springtime of their bright college years comes back to them. I am being a little sentimental, I know, but I ask you, if this kind of familiarity with and affection for the classics studied in English class does not exist in these homes I like to visualize, have we not missed something which ought not to have been missed?

What does the student take home now? Certainly no paperbacks of the *used* kind. They have fallen apart down to the last leaf. Nothing to do with them after the final exam—if they last that long—but toss them into the wastepaper basket.

I think the most practical procedure is a compromise between the durable and the

less durable. I personally like a durable basic text, a hard-cover, portable core-anthology, which contains standard pieces by a good many writers, pieces which could hardly be had except in an anthology (unless in a much too forbidding pile of paperbacks). This core-anthology will be supplemented as much or as little as one chooses by paperbacks, mostly novels. Of course, now that the new critical teaching has brought the literary text into the classroom, it may be a question whether even

these supplementary books can escape damaging attrition. We *must* look at certain passages; we must look at words, at symbols. We must have before us in class the text of *The Scarlet Letter* and of *Huckleberry Finn*. But the paperbacks will stand a week or ten days of this, if they aren't thrown *too* hard into the backs of cars, and the sturdy core-anthology, which contains many interesting and indispensable things besides "The Rhodora" and "The Equilibrists," will last a lifetime.

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## The Essential Wisdom of Roger Ascham

FRANCES LENK

*Mrs. Lenk, a junior at Eastern New Mexico University, wrote a few sonnets as an exercise suggested by Professor H. Grady Moore in a Renaissance course. The results should delight and encourage other teachers and students of English.*

That one example does far truer speak  
Than twenty precepts, he most sorely knew  
Who watched his diligent, beloved Cheke  
Slink out of England; and his wisdom grew  
Most suddenly and grievously that day  
He saw her groping blindfold for the block—  
His noble lady, learned, poor Jane Grey—  
While *Phaedo* both and Prayer Book made her mock.  
Latimer in a thin frieze frock all worn,  
Ridley in fair gown fouled with autumn mud,  
Bequeathed him wisdom instant and forlorn  
From bloody fire, from fire of murdered blood.  
What moment then the hundred books he read?  
Example taught him mind his tongue and head.

# Current English Forum

## LOGIC AND ANALOGY IN SOME ADJECTIVAL COMPOUNDS

J. EDWIN WHITESELL

*Co-founder of The Explicator, Dr. Whitesell is also a philologist with publication in the Old English field. He is a professor at the University of South Carolina; his degrees are from Randolph-Macon College and Harvard.*

Several years ago a very intelligent German refugee who was translating into English some essays which he had written in German asked me to help him on certain points of English idiom. As we worked together, on various occasions he remarked: "How logical and exact the English language is—so much more so than German!" At the time I swelled with pride, but as the years have passed I find that our language is not quite so logical sometimes as my German friend thought.

Take, for instance, the following expressions. We speak indiscriminately of a basketball center as being *seven feet tall* or as a *seven-footer*. We buy a bucket to hold *three gallons*, or a *three-gallon* bucket. A hat costs *ten dollars*; it is a *ten-dollar* hat. We get a *99-year* lease, one for *99 years*. We plan a *six-couple* house-party, one for *six couples*. Strict logic applied to the examples above would seem to demand that we say a *three-gallons* bucket, a *ten-dollars* hat, etc. But of course this is not the English idiom. On the contrary, whenever an adjectival compound (1) expresses a single idea, (2) is placed directly in front of the substantive it modifies, and (3) is composed of a numeral and the noun that numeral modifies, this compound is regularly hyphenated and the noun appears in its singular form even though the numeral is plural.

Both Curme (*A Grammar of the English Language*, II, 118, and III, 542) and Jespersen (*A Modern English Grammar*, II, 57ff., and II, 185ff.) consider these apparently singular nouns to be plural. Jespersen cites numerous examples of unchanged plurals used with measures of time, measures of length, measures of weight, and words indicating money. (Oddly enough, though he gives examples of *year*, *month*, *night*, *week*, and *hour* as

being plural, he fails to mention *century*, *decade*, *day*, *minute*, and *second*. These latter are familiar to us as plurals, however, in such expressions as *ten-century-old* legend—alongside *centuries-old* legend—*five-day* week, and *ten-second* hundred-yard dash.) Curme and Jespersen are surely right about the number of these nouns; and by analogy to these unchanged Anglo-Saxon plurals there have developed other plurals without *-s* in non-Anglo-Saxon words which have become part of our language (*four-bulb* electric lamp, *two-piano* team, *100-degree* temperature, *six-cylinder* motor, and *two-engine* plane).

But in actual current usage, even among educated persons, we find that the adjectival compound frequently occurs with a plural noun in *-s*. Take, for instance, a *six weeks* report, a *three-months* visit, a *fifteen-days* vacation. Are these "correctly" expressed and written? Should we write only a *six-week* report, a *three-month* visit, a *fifteen-day* vacation? Or perhaps a *six-weeks'* report, a *three months'* visit, a *fifteen days'* vacation? Since educated persons do write all of these forms, many other persons (especially students) feel confused about what is correct. The confusion is seen in *five-and-ten-cents* (or *cents'*) store alongside *five-and-ten-cent* store, as well as in the multiple adjectival forms of *state-right*, *states-right*, *state-rights*, *states-rights* (found also with the apostrophe in either or both words and/or without the hyphen).

The tendency toward adjectival compounds with plural nouns in *-s* appears to be strongest in nouns of time. Though Americans seem always (or almost always) to speak of a *three-day* weekend rather than a *three-days* (or *days'*) weekend and a *five-year* course rather than a *five-years* (or *years'*) course, I think I often hear them

speak of a *six-months* (or *months'*) training period alongside a *six-month* training period; and I am almost sure that they speak of a *four-weeks* (or *weeks'*) vacation rather than a *four-week* vacation. But if there is any logic in these apparent preferences, I have not been able to discover it.

In addition to nouns of time, nouns of distance and of money seem also to be tending toward the plural in -s in adjectival compounds. Americans speak of a *twenty-dollar* fine or a *twenty-dollars* fine, of a *five-cent-an-hour* wage increase or a *five-cents-an-hour* wage increase. One may

drive at a *60-mile-an-hour* speed or a *60-miles-an-hour* speed. Surely it is understandable that an American who speaks of a speed of *60 miles an hour* in one breath should not hesitate to refer to it as a *60-miles-an-hour* speed in the next.

If I may hazard a guess about the future, I predict that the obviously plural forms of nouns in -s will continue to spread in adjectival compounds. The conflict is one between analogy and logic; and in language as in human relations the outcome of such a conflict is never certain.

## The Whale

ROBERT DUSENBERY

*Associate Professor Dusenberry is Department Chairman at Lewis and Clark College.*

You are only three, yet you have heard of the Whale;  
He lives with us on several shelves, ubiquitous,  
In the study, at the end of the long rug,  
At times in the hands of some student.  
Last night, as I looked along the line of books  
You asked if I had found *Moby Dick* yet  
And I answered that I had not; I had hope.  
I know he was there somewhere before me  
Near Dante and Milton, perhaps beside Goethe;  
I anticipated the place, but the Whale  
Had escaped the tie again, descending too deep.  
Now, I leave him to you, for you with your time  
And your love for all creatures that move  
May find him some day on this same shelf  
And when found you may cry out with Ahab,  
"Oh Moby Dick, I clutch thy heart at last!"

# Councilletter

INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH

BRICE HARRIS

JUNIOR PAST PRESIDENT

Contributors to the Councilletter usually employ the telescope for their surveys. They glance over the Council landscape, scanning the horizons of the past year and reporting on the prominent objects that tower behind them. I hope I may be forgiven, then, if I turn to the microscope as the better instrument for my purpose at this time. I want to focus it on just one phase of Council work that impresses me as being particularly significant now, and that is English and English teaching on the world scene. I have at my side a crystal ball which I may use, too, not because I profess to be proficient with it, but rather because it may help project the image I think I see in the microscope.

My solicitude for the Council's position in the international picture is sparked by the recent announcement (*N. Y. Times*, 30 December 1958) that the Ford Foundation alone is spending \$601,000 this year to improve the teaching of English in foreign countries. "English," says the Foundation's Vice-President Price, "has become the leading language in international communications, diplomacy, science, and scholarship. As a result most countries have made English the most widely taught language in their schools and colleges." Few of the North American Smith-Mundt and Fulbright teachers in foreign posts during the last ten years will quibble with Mr. Price's statement.

The major part of this immense outlay of money is designed to help American institutions and organizations meet increasing foreign requests for American assistance in English-language teaching and in teacher training. Almost one third of this money goes to the Modern Language Association, which will establish a center in Washington, a kind of clearing house for distributing information on research and training and for encouraging applied linguistics. This action is praiseworthy and

forward looking, and each member of the Council would do well to ask himself where we stand in the picture.

We have two committees which are vitally concerned with this issue, the Committee on Teaching English as a Second Language and the Committee on International Cooperation. (The first-named committee is steadily hampered in its operations by the fact that its chairmen and personnel are in constant demand for foreign appointments.) We may assume further that the following committees could conceivably have a stake in these world plans: Linguistics, Linguistic Terminology, Comparative Literature, Education of College Teachers, and English Teacher Recruitment, not to mention the Commission on the Profession and the Committee on Selection . . . of College Teachers of English. We may have to consider other committees, although I am not convinced that committees or conferences or commissions can ever do the whole job.

What then can we do? Here I leave the microscope for the crystal ball. Ahead of us I can see a vastly enlivened and highly purposeful Committee on Teaching English as a Second Language. I see assisting this committee a large number of our Council-members who have worked overseas with USAFI, with the Smith-Mundt and Fulbright Boards, and with the State Department, and even privately. From memory I could write down a long list of Council members who have served abroad and at home as teachers of English to foreign students. I see these men and women exerting themselves collectively to promote the English language abroad, missionaries well trained and well paid, culturally and personally suited to this kind of job. I see our Council recruitment committees now concerning themselves with the selection and training of such people, weighing the matter as heavily as if they were selecting

personnel for home use. I see the Council with its huge manpower and organization potential assisting the new Center in Washington in every available way. In the newspaper and magazine press I see infinitely more articles on the English language as it concerns international relations, articles like "The Foreign Policy of my Daughter Ellen," (*Harper's*, February 1959) by Council member and Fulbrighter Paul Roberts. Nearer at hand, in fact in July 1959 in historic Sherwood Forest, I see fifty or sixty English teachers from America study-

ing methods of teaching their subject with the same number of English teachers from England. Present are two members of last year's Executive Committee and our Executive Secretary. And as the picture fades I see our Executive Secretary making other contacts for us abroad—could he possibly have in the back of his head some plans for an International Council of Teachers of English? But crystal balls never reveal what is in the back of people's heads, and they refuse to be pushed beyond their powers.

### NCTE COLLEGE SECTION: 1959 NOMINATIONS

In May, Council members of the College Section will receive mail ballots for electing two members of the Section Committee and two Directors of the Council to represent the Section. In accordance with the requirements of the NCTE Constitution, the names of the persons chosen by the Nominating Committee are printed below. Additional nominees may be named by a petition signed by fifteen members of the Council.

#### *College Section Committee (Two to be elected)*

M. Agnella Gunn, *Boston University*  
Louise M. Rosenblatt, *New York University (Washington Square)*  
R. C. Simonini, Jr., *Longwood College*  
James R. Squire, *University of California*

#### *Directors Representing the College Section (Two to be elected)*

Newman P. Birk, *Tufts College*  
Herman Estrin, *Newark College of Engineering*  
George L. Sixbey, *Arkansas State Teachers College, Conway*  
J. Hooper Wise, *University of Florida*

#### *College English Advisers*

In addition, members of the section will vote in May for advisers to the Editor of *College English*. One person is to be elected in each of the following categories:

*American Literature before 1912:* Edward H. Davidson, *University of Illinois*; Stephen Whicher, *Cornell University*.

*American Literature since 1912:* Edwin H. Cady, *Syracuse University*; John Lydenberg, *Hobart College*.

*Eighteenth Century:* B. H. Bronson, *University of California*; Alan D. McKillop, *Rice Institute*

*Nineteenth Century:* Robert W. Daniel, *University of Tennessee*; Earl R. Wasserman, *Johns Hopkins University*.

*British Literature since 1912:* Gerhard Friedrich, *Cedar Crest College, Pennsylvania*; Winifred Lynskey, *Purdue University*.

*Shakespeare:* I. B. Cauthen, Jr., *University of Virginia*; Richard M. Hosley, *University of Missouri*.

*Criticism:* Wallace Douglas, *Northwestern University*; Walter J. Ong, *St. Louis University*.

*Drama:* Henry Popkin, *Brandeis University*; Otto Reinert, *University of Washington*.

*Poetry:* Judson Jerome, *Antioch College*; Philip D. Appleman, *Indiana University*.

*Composition:* Francis E. Bowman, *Duke University*; Charlton Laird, *University of Nevada*.

This year's Nominating Committee consisted of Richard Beal (*Boston University*), Glenn Leggett (*University of Washington*), and George S. Wykoff (*Purdue University*), *Chairman*.

## Rebuttal

### LINGUISTICS AND THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

TERRY HAWKES

An instructor at the University of Buffalo, Mr. Hawkes holds degrees from the University of Wales. He has published articles on Joyce and Shakespeare, as well as poems and a short story in British organs. He is at present working on prosody in the light of modern linguistics.

In a recent article, "Some Uses of Linguistics and Semantics in Freshman English" (*CE*, Apr. 1958), Mr. Byron Guyer claims the successful application of the science of linguistics to the problems of teaching English to college freshmen. In addition, Mr. Guyer also claims that by the further consideration of the elements of semantics, he is able to provide his students with concrete facts about the language, which are an aid to their manipulation of it. Unfortunately, however, it seems that once again the straw men of structure are being set up and knocked down with mistaken flourishes. How many of the mistakes in a freshman composition are mistakes of structure? Mr. Guyer himself states that any native speaker of the language must, by definition, already be aware of the fantastically complicated structures of English. All of the students in any freshman class know the structure of the language as well as their instructor, if they are native speakers. They may not speak English of the same *standard* as their instructor, but they are no more likely to make mistakes in the basic structure-pattern of the sentence than he is. It is one of the failings of linguistic pedagogy that it presents the student with a mass of material which would be most useful if he were learning English as a foreign language, but which, as a native speaker, he knows perfectly well already.

In fact, a detailed study of the mistakes which occur in freshman themes might well reveal that the student is only too aware of the structure of the language, and falls down as a result of the apparent inability of the *writing system* of English fully to reflect this structure. It is therefore a waste of time to attempt to correct, say, the sentence-fragment by illustrations of the

Subject . . . Verb . . . Object patterning of English. The student is fully aware of this patterning, and is probably half-aware that this is not the reason why he writes sentence-fragments. The reason why he writes sentence-fragments is because he speaks sentence-fragments, as all native speakers do. Thus, where he would *say* "I went out with her [slight pause, the single-bar juncture of the Trager-Smith phonology] although I didn't want to," he may well *write* "I went out with her. Although I didn't want to." What he should be *taught* is that the pause of the single-bar juncture is indicated in the writing system of English at most by a comma, *never* by a period. It is lack of proper knowledge of the relationship of the writing system to phonological phenomena that has caused the mistake, not lack of knowledge about the structure of English.

Similarly, Mr. Guyer's account of his use of semantics seems to obscure the real issues. The experience of linguists has shown that it is the height of folly to attempt the juxtaposition of meaning and structure, except on a very advanced level (which has yet to be competently reached). Mixing of the levels of meaning with the levels of the necessarily prior studies of most of microlinguistics can lead only to disaster. If Mr. Guyer says "the semantic concepts provide a rational background for the linguistic concepts," he seems to be falling into the same trap. "Meaning" is a separate level from the problems of phonemics, morphology, and syntax, which are objective studies of structure and movement in language, and is not something that must be a previous consideration. For example, statements such as "Semantically or logically, the simpler and more wide open the syntactical pattern, the more

limited by that simplicity are the ideas symbolised as content," represent the same fundamental confusion, and are patently wrong. Mr. Guyer's students may well be able to see that the "simple" syntactic pattern of "(N) Professors-(V) act-(Adv) absentmindedly" contains only a very simple "idea," but they will be hard put to it, if they believe that the simplicity is caused by the "simple" syntax to explain why, in

even "simpler" syntactic structures, sentences such as "(S) Beauty-(V) is-(Comp) Truth" or "(S) The World-(V) is-(Comp) the sum of the things which are said to be the case" contain "ideas" which are very far from being simple. Until more is known about semological matters, it might be unwise for such considerations to be allowed to take up a teacher's valuable time.

### COZZENS

JOHN LYDENBERG

*The author of "Cozzens and the Critics" (College English, December 1957) is Professor of English and of American Studies at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, with a Harvard Ph.D. in American Civilization and a half-dozen major articles published in modern American literature.*

When I found the April *CE* Rebuttal department apparently given over to my piece on Cozzens I was excited and flattered. Also a bit apprehensive, for I am not skilled in the techniques of scholarly in-fighting and now I would be put to the test, forced to answer four serious rebuttals. But on reading them I was relieved to find there was little I needed to say. Two articles do not mention mine, and were obviously not meant as rebuttals. The other two use mine as springboard for an attack on *BLP*, which is all right by me, but not relevant to my attempt to analyze the reasons why the critics had up to then largely ignored Cozzens.

In "Cozzens: Some Reservations about *BLP*," Mr. William Frost explains why critics should not like Cozzens's latest, jumping off immediately from my article with the briefest reference to it and happily no more misrepresentation than the consistent misspelling of my name.

To Mr. John Hermann's "Cozzens and a Critic," I have to pay more attention. His opening paragraph reads *in toto* (the ellipses are his, not mine):

Mr. Lydenberg's article in the Dec., 1957 *CE* sets forth the following argument: mature and intelligent readers like Cozzens; immature and adolescent readers prefer Faulkner or Salinger. I like Cozzens; if you admire Faulkner or Salinger. . . . What an interesting piece of logic!

Interesting indeed, and the logic is all Mr. Hermann's; I don't recognize any of it except for some of the words. I did contrast Salinger with Cozzens. I did mention Faulkner, but in a wholly different context and merely to make a simple, factual, historical point. "Mature" was indeed a word I used in connection with Cozzens, but I doubt that the words "intelligent" or "immature" or "adolescent" appear anywhere, and certainly not as Mr. Hermann attributes them to me. His syllogistic ideas were apparently loosely derived from my last three paragraphs, in which I contrasted Salinger as a "romantic in the great American tradition" with the conservative and "realistic" Cozzens. I pointed out that today's college students, though considered mature beyond their years, conservative, unventuresome, unromantic, do not care for Cozzens, the novelist of unromantic maturity, and that they do like Salinger. I used the word romantic not as a pejorative, but as neutrally descriptive—a use I thought most *CE* readers would recognize. And I in no wise implied that Cozzens was superior to Salinger, merely different. Me, I happen to like Cozzens and Salinger and Faulkner and many others.

The rest of Mr. Hermann's piece has nothing to do with the points I was trying to make, and could have been written without his misreading and misrepresentation of my article.

# Books

## VICTORIAN ANTHOLOGIES

JOHN PICK

*One of the foremost critics of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Dr. Pick is a professor at Marquette University, where he has taught since 1945. He took his B.A. at Notre Dame and his M.A. and Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin and then taught at Boston College and Groton School.*

Choosing a textbook for a course in Victorian literature is largely dependent on a few fundamental decisions: is the course to cover all the genres—poetry, prose, drama, and even fiction? Or is it to be devoted to only one or two of these? The reply is often contingent upon another question: is the course to be for one term only or for an entire year? Still another basic question is: shall the course attempt to survey a wide variety and number of authors, or shall it concentrate on major writers only? One of the current—and possibly misleading—ways of putting this query is: Shall the course be an experience in breadth or in depth? Further, the answers to all these interrogations may be determined by whether the course is predominantly for undergraduates, graduates, or mixed groups.

The most comprehensive text available is *The Victorian Ages Prose, Poetry, and Drama*, ed. Bowyer and Brooks (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1954, \$6.75). In its 1200 pages are included both major and minor poets and prosemen—over 50 in number—though the minor writers are often represented by only a page or two each. Seven Victorian dramas as reprinted: Robertson's "Caste," W. S. Gilbert's "Iolanthe," Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest," Henry Arthur Jones's "Michael and His Lost Angel," Pinero's "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," Shaw's "Arms and the Man," and Yeats's "The Countess Cathleen." But, of course, even 1200 pages cannot include everything, and trimming is necessary; thus "In Memoriam" is represented by eight pages; "The Ring and the Book" by "O Lyric Love" only, and "Modern Love" by seven "sonnets." Selections from fiction are notoriously unsatisfactory, but Bowyer

and Brooks meet this problem admirably in an appendix of some twenty pages in which they offer an annotated guide: in a sentence or two they summarize the theme or subject and significance of scores of Victorian novels, enabling the student to choose wisely for outside reading or reports. The volume has a helpful general introduction, and the introductions to the separate authors often generously run to half a dozen pages. Selections bear both the dates of composition and of publication, and the notes are good. It was originally published in 1938, but in 1954 the bibliographies, with frequent annotations, were reworked and brought up to date. This anthology is probably the best single text for a full year comprehensive undergraduate course covering all the principal genres and both major and minor writers.

Far less satisfactory for a comprehensive course are the two relevant volumes, *The Victorian Age (1832-1880)* and *Later Victorians and the Moderns (Since 1880)*, of the seven-volume anthology entitled *English Literature and Its Backgrounds*, ed. Grebanier, Middlebrook, Thompson, and Watt (Dryden, revised ed. 1949, paper, \$2.40 each), a total of 950 pages of Victorian poetry and prose, including only two plays (Browning's "In a Balcony" and Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest"), though it boasts that it is "virtually an anthology of drama." There is a tendency toward excerpts in spite of the editors' promise to give complete selections wherever possible. The illustrations are interesting, but the tone of the introductions and notes suggests that the volumes are less suited to separate courses in the Victorians than to a sophomore survey curriculum. The bibliographies need revision, and the

end-paper, a literary map of England, curiously ignores the existence of the Empire's capital.

Anthologies limited to Victorian poetry only fall into two groups, those restricting themselves to a limited number of great or representative names, or those attempting to include minor poets as well.

To the second group belongs an anthology long popular: Woods's *Poetry of the Victorian Period* (Scott, Foresman, 1955, \$8.00). The edition of 1930 was revised by Woods and Buckley in 1955. Substantially the two editions are the same, though within their thousand pages there have been some shifts. Macaulay, for instance, has been dropped, while selections from Kipling, Yeats, and Hopkins have been expanded. A few minor poets are no longer represented, but one may still find verse by Doyle, Aytoun, Turner, Todhunter, and others. "The Dream of Gerontius," "The House of Life" and "Modern Love" are now printed in full, making the volume notable for the total number of long complete poems included. There is no general introduction to the anthology, but the biographical and critical materials in the notes at the back and the bibliographies have been carefully revised in the light of recent scholarship. Helpful asterisks indicate scholarly works of primary importance. For undergraduates the earlier edition had an almost unreadable formidability, and the editors in the later version have made efforts to make the book more attractive: they have used a paper slightly heavier and have inserted an eight-page section of photos, drawings, and illustrations; instead of having a dark, dull green binding, the book now appears in pastel green with a glowing gold spine. The anthology remains one of the fullest volumes of generous selections from both major and minor Victorian poets.

Very similar is *Victorian and Later English Poets*, ed. Stephens, Beck, and Snow (American Book Company, 1952, \$7.00). While Woods and Buckley embrace 54 poets, Stephens, Beck, and Snow cut the number to 33. Their book is 200 pages longer, and strong in minor poetry of the nineties. At first the 200 additional pages might seem accounted for by the inclusion of "later English poets" indicated by the

title, though actually they include no post-Victorian poets not in Woods and Buckley. One hundred or more of the additional pages are selections from the letters (and occasionally from the critical writing) of five poets: Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Rossetti, and Swinburne; these, along with the facsimiles of drawings, of pages of original MSS. and title pages, constitute a special feature of the anthology. There are just about as many notes as in Woods and Buckley, but the scholarship and annotated bibliographies are dated. Though the volume has an impressive list of copyright years from 1934 to 1952, only very rarely is there reference to any book or article as recent as 1935. While the anthology of Woods and Buckley carries no general introduction, that of Stephens, Beck, and Snow is encumbered by an idiosyncratic one. James Stephens rambles for some twenty pages about the differences between prose and poetry, between major and minor poetry (minor poetry is sensuous and betrays the peasant mind). Interlarded are some astonishing and unconventional dicta: "At the end, say, of every hundred years, there should be an universal solemn destruction by fire and dynamite of all the bad, the incomplete, and experimental work of the previous era . . ." or "There are matters about which no young person knows anything: art is one of them," or ". . . thoroughly to understand Wordsworth is thoroughly to understand the Nineteenth Century. Wordsworth is the Nineteenth Century. . ." The final half-dozen pages of the introduction are devoted—but discontinuously—to the Victorian poets themselves. Stephens was having his field day among the scholars.

Of the anthologies of Victorian poetry omitting minor versifiers to concentrate on major poets, the most outstanding is *Victorian Poetry*, ed. E. K. Brown (Ronald Press, 1942, \$6.00). This manageable volume devotes almost 600 of its 750 pages to selections from five major figures (Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Swinburne, and Rossetti), with the remaining 150 pages divided among nine lesser writers (E. B. Browning, Fitzgerald, Clough, Christina Rossetti, Meredith, Morris, Hardy, Hopkins, and Housman; one rather misses a tenth, Kipling). There is a special attempt

to include within the space limitations an unusual number of longer works (complete versions of "Atlanta in Calydon," "The House of Life," "Modern Love," "In Memoriam," "Maud," two of the "Idylls," two full monologues from "The Ring and the Book," "Bishop Blougram's Apology," etc.). The general introduction is unusual, emphasizing not only the expected political, social, and religious backgrounds but also the problems of form facing the Victorians. There are 150 pages of bibliographies and notes; the former are brief but well selected, though they have not been revised or brought up to date since 1942 when the book was published. An important portion of the volume is printed in single columns instead of the more formidable double-column arrangement. The anthology is especially suited to one-semester undergraduate courses in Victorian poetry where the emphasis is on major writers and their major work.

The most recent (announced for publication January 1959) poetry anthology contains an interesting new feature which will appeal to many teachers. Walter E. Houghton and G. Robert Stange's *Victorian Poetry and Poetics* (Houghton Mifflin, 1959, 856 pp., \$7.50) in addition to being a collection of 16 major and minor Victorian poets, also includes a selection of 220 pages of prose drawn from the Victorians and directly bearing on poetic theory and criticism. These include such things as Carlyle's "The Hero as a Man of Letters," Arnold's "Preface to Poems 1853" and "The Study of Poetry," Morris's "Pre-Raphaelite School," Hopkins's "Author's Preface," Wilde's Preface to *Dorian Gray*, Buchanan's "The Fleshly School of Poetry," and generous selections of reviews and letters. The quality of both the general introduction, which is largely devoted to the alienation of the writer during Victorian times, and the introductions to the individual authors, the highly selective but recently reworked bibliographies, the carefully presented notes—these combine to make this newcomer in the field a highly desirable text.

For those who prefer separate paper-bound texts for a course in Victorian poetry, Rinehart has just completed a series of four: *Tennyson: Selected Poetry* (ed. H.

M. McLuhan, 1956, 394 pp., 75¢), *Browning: Selected Poetry* (ed. Horace Gregory, 1956, 286 pp., 65¢), *Arnold: Selected Poetry and Prose* (ed. F. L. Mulhauser, 1953, 353 pp., 95¢) and most recently *Victorian Poetry*: Clough to Kipling (ed. Arthur Carr, 384 pp., 95¢). The last-named—in spite of its rather misleading title—is an omnibus including the major Victorians other than Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold as well as the minor figures; it was not available at the time of writing this survey. Each of the first three anthologies contains a stimulating introduction, a chronology, and a brief bibliography, but there are almost no notes—an omission probably most serious in the case of Browning.

This is not a difficulty in the pair of paperbounds published by Houghton Mifflin: *Poems of Robert Browning* (ed. Donald Smalley, 1956, 543 pp., 95¢) and *Poems of Tennyson* (ed. Jerome Buckley, 1958, 542 pp., \$1.25). Each contains more than 500 pages, and the Browning Volume includes over sixty pages of notes. The Houghton Mifflin twosome is especially suitable for a Victorian course concentrating on Tennyson and Browning.

The sixth volume of *English Masterpieces* (general editor Maynard Mack) entitled *Romantic and Victorian Poetry* (ed. William Frost, Prentice-Hall, 1950, \$2.75), might offhand seem an available anthology for courses in Victorian poetry. But within its 335 pages the editor finds room for only 75 pages of the Victorians (Arnold, Browning, Swinburne, and Tennyson). Even for use in sophomore survey courses this is a very restricted diet.

Of very dubious value for courses in Victorian poetry is *Victorian and Edwardian Poets: Tennyson to Yeats*, ed. W. H. Auden and Norman Holmes Pearson (Viking, 1950, paper, \$1.45) in their five-volume series *Poets of the English Language*. In spite of the bargain price, the volume presents numerous difficulties. It attempts to include not only English (450 pages) but also American (150 pages) poets—a rare combination in college Victorian courses. The inclusion of some of the Edwardians brings the numbers of English poets to two dozen, but they are often represented by snippets and excerpts. No dates are indicated for the selections. Their order is

often neither chronological nor based on any other perceptible rationale. Thus, Hopkins's "The Summer Malison," written in 1865 (and published, like all of his poems, in 1918), is inserted between a poem written in 1885 and another in 1888. Lines are not numbered, there are no notes, and the half dozen pages of biographies are too scant to be helpful, though twenty pages are squandered on "A Calendar of British and American Poetry," of value only to those who wish to correlate the poetry of the two countries. There is a brief introduction with the thesis that what divides Victorian from modern poets is that for the Victorians the ideas and hopes of liberal Christian humanism were still valid. The entire anthology is designed more for the general reader than for the student.

When one turns to survey the available anthologies limited to Victorian prose there seem to be only three.

The most comprehensive is the monumental *English Prose of the Victorian Era*, ed. Harrold and Templeman (Oxford, 1938, \$7.50), a masterpiece of editing and presentation. After an introduction of 80 pages there are texts of 1500, notes, apparatus and bibliographies of 230—a grand total of over 1700 pages. The introduction by Harrold—a substitute for many opening lectures—covers the principal social, political, economic, and theological movements of the period and constitutes almost a small book in itself.

Among the selections, Carlyle, Macaulay, Ruskin, and Arnold are allotted roughly 250 pages each. Newman, Pater, and Mill are given 100 each. Then 150 pages cover the combined work of Huxley, Morris, Thackeray, Stevenson, Alexander Smith, and Froude. Almost all of the selections are complete, and there is little abridgement. At the back one finds a general chronological outline, tables of population growth, general and special bibliographies. To each author is devoted a special chronological outline, a commentary, and bibliography (subdivided into a bibliography of bibliographies, of principal works, biographies, critical and expository works, short critical works, etc.); then follow generous notes. A special appendix of 150 pages gathers together passages illustrative of 19th century conceptions of growth, develop-

ment, and evolution; here will be found selections from Lyell, Chambers, Darwin, Spencer, and Bagehot as well as from Marx, Engels, and Newman. The book is especially suited to advanced undergraduate (probably of more than one term) or graduate courses. The only defect is that unfortunately by this time the bibliographies need revision to include the best scholarship of the last two decades—but this might constitute an admirable set of exercises for graduate students.

Half as thick (738 pages) is *Victorian Prose*, ed. F. W. Roe (Ronald, 1947, \$6.00), a companion to Brown's *Victorian Poetry*. The general introduction is followed by about 75 pages each from Carlyle, Macaulay, Ruskin, and Arnold; 50 each from Newman, Morris, Huxley, and Mill; 30 each from Pater, Darwin, Froude, and Stevenson. There is relatively little abridgement. Introductions to individual authors, bibliographies, notes, and comments are helpful and adequate. Within its limits this is probably the ideal prose anthology for undergraduate or one-term courses.

Somewhat shorter than Roe is *Prose of the Victorian Period*, ed. William E. Buckler (Houghton Mifflin, 1958, \$3.25; paper, \$1.65) with 570 pages, the latest comer (1958) into the field and at an attractive price. This anthology confines itself to seven: Macaulay (82 pages), Carlyle (94), Newman (70), Mill (95), Ruskin (64), Arnold (95), Huxley (30), and Pater (25), managing to give fairly long selections from a limited number of major figures. Instead of the usual introduction emphasizing backgrounds, Buckler has written on methods of critical analysis applicable to Victorian prose. Taking his cue from articles by Dwight Culler and Martin Svaglic he offers students a valuable and challenging set of tentative suggestions on how to study Victorian prose. In trying to provide the largest possible selection at the lowest possible price, Buckler has reduced to a minimum—and sometimes to a sub-minimum—space devoted to other helps and aids. There are no elaborate introductions to separate authors, and headnotes and bibliographies are very brief. There are few notes, the editor having the optimistic confidence that students will look up things for themselves. This makes the volume a

questionable choice for the very person for whom it is designed: the undergraduate—though his pocketbook has been spared.

If one now goes back to the questions suggested in the opening paragraphs of this

survey, he should be in a position to evoke from publishers examination copies of those available anthologies best suited to the kind of course in the Victorians he wishes to give.

## Other Books

**LETTERS OF THE BROWNING'S TO GEORGE BARRETT**, ed. Paul Landis and R. E. Freeman (Illinois, 1958, 392 pp., \$6.50). In 1950 the University of Illinois acquired a collection of Browning papers which included ninety-one letters from the Brownings to George Barrett. George was Elizabeth's barrister brother, ten years her junior, "a little over-grave" to her, "the one useful brother" to Robert. (Elizabeth had eight.) The letters are now edited by Professors Landis (Illinois) and Freeman (Southern California). So much Browning correspondence has already been published that these new letters supply no new information. But we have them in a handsomely printed, generously illustrated volume, rounded out with a kind-hearted introduction and chatty notes.

EDWARD C. McALEER

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

**WIELAND, OR THE TRANSFORMATION**, Charles Brockden Brown (Hafner, 1958, 351 pp., paper, \$1.95). Hafner has done a service in reprinting the 1926 Harcourt Brace reprint of our first considerable novel. The Pattee introduction is dated, but the convenience of having the appended 75-page "Memoirs of Carwin, the Biloquist" compensates for it.

**ORAL INTERPRETATION AND LITERARY STUDY**, Don Geiger (San Francisco: Pieter Van Vloten, 1958, 80 pp., \$2, paper \$1). Don Geiger believes that oral reading is "a critical illumination" of literature, and that the oral reader has advantages over other mediators between author and audience. The textual critic may describe "the massive weight of the line"; the oral interpreter reproduces the "full particular effect." He draws upon the historians, biographers, and critics, but achieves a communicative synthesis superior to theirs. Despite the polemical impres-

sion created by this bald statement of some of his leading ideas, Professor Geiger (California) is urbane, witty, and modest in exposition of such matters as the interpreter's relationship to literary scholarship, his use of facial, bodily, and vocal action, and his effort to strike a balance between the "objective correlative" and the emotion it arouses. Teachers of interpretation will treasure this literate illumination of their convictions from a man who is both a teacher and a poet. Others may be led to explore further the work being done today under the stimulus of a reviving interest in the oral tradition of poetry.

NORMAN W. MATTIS  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

**JOYCE CARY: A PREFACE TO HIS NOVELS**, Andrew Wright (Chatto and Windus, 1958, 186 pp., £2.25). This first book-length critique of Cary's fiction contains more biographical information about Cary than has previously appeared in one place before. Appended are an interesting set of Cary's preliminary notes for *The Horse's Mouth*, M. O. Percival's glosses of the Blake quotations for the same novel, and the most extensive Cary bibliography yet compiled. Professor Wright's (Ohio State) text contains many valuable insights into Cary's published fiction as well as information about many unpublished mss. However the numerous theses set going give the reader only fragmentary glimpses of each novel in too many different places in the book, and valuable as it is to learn Professor Wright's main thesis—that Cary was obsessed by three dominant character types throughout his writing career—this conclusion inordinately emphasizes the similarity of Cary's fiction rather than its chief virtue: its various multiplicity.

GEORGE STEINBRECHER, JR.  
CHICAGO CITY JUNIOR COLLEGE

**THE HISTORY OF FANNY BURNEY,** Joyce Hemlow (Oxford, 1958, 528 pp., \$8.50). This is the definitive biography, based on a judicious use of the immense manuscript collections formed by the Burney family, who were indefatigable diarists and letterwriters. Miss Hemlow (Toronto) gives a sympathetic portrait of Madame d'Arblay and makes perceptive critical comments on her novels. Fanny's life spanned a major shift in sensibility (she was, remember, both a close friend of Dr. Johnson's and a contemporary of Macaulay) and she was, unlike her peer Miss Austen, unable to rise above this shift in her art. But the very relationship of this failure to her works makes the book significant reading for students of the novel.

CALHOUN WINTON  
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

**CHARLES DICKENS: THE WORLD OF HIS NOVELS**, J. Hillis Miller (Harvard, 1958, 334 pp., \$6). This difficult and sometimes obscure book will have, I think, an importance for literary theory independent of its uses for the study of Dickens. Mr. Miller's work is a distinguished example of a procedure more familiar in French than in English or American critical literature. His initial approach resembles that of the "new critic" in that he regards Dickens's novels as autonomous works of art and bases his observations upon a close textual analysis. His intention, however, is not to study the language of the novel, nor its formal structure, images, or themes, but rather to define what might be called the novelist's mode of apprehension, and (in the author's own words) "to trace [Dickens's] vision of things from one novel to another throughout the chronological span of his career." He wishes to reveal "the way of being in the world" that is presented in these novels. With frequent recourse to the language and concepts of existential philosophy, Mr. Miller defines in Dickens's work a single great theme or problem: the search of the outcast for viable identity. Dickens's advances on this problem display a consistent deepening of his apprehension of the nature of the world and of the human condition. Mr. Miller

supports his thesis by detailed analyses of six of the novels and brief discussions of several others. That his book should sometimes be tedious is perhaps a necessary result of its thesis: in pursuing the narrowing spiral of Dickens's apprehension the critic must go over the same ground many times, though each time in a slightly different way. Thus the frivolous reader may get an impression of prolixity or repetitiveness when, in fact, Mr. Miller's language is admirably clear and succinct—even, at times, quietly elegant. There is no question that this book is worthy of careful and respectful attention. It is not the systematic critical study of Dickens that is so much needed. The teacher who deals with these novels in the classroom will not, I suspect, derive any immediately useful insights. What we are given instead is a demonstration by means of an entirely new approach of the value and importance of Dickens's fictional achievement. And it is of more than incidental importance that this new approach should define some freshly perceived relationships between literature and life.

G. ROBERT STANGE  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

**T. S. ELIOT'S FOUR QUARTERS: A COMMENTARY**, C. A. Bodelsen (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde & Bagger, 1958, 128 pp., about \$2, paper). This thorough, intensive, and illuminating study expertly performs a much-needed service for students of Eliot's complex and difficult poem. It gives a clear analysis of the structure, themes, motifs, and meanings of each of the quartets separately and of the four together. It also gives a line-by-line explication of the more difficult passages. Professor Bodelsen (Copenhagen) has drawn judiciously upon Eliot criticism and scholarship and throughout has contributed many sound and revealing insights of his own. The book's usefulness for the student is enhanced by the introductory chapter on Eliot's poetic technique; its value for the specialist is everywhere apparent as it elucidates the obscure and illuminates the difficult.

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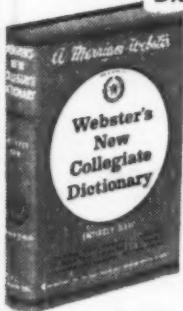
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